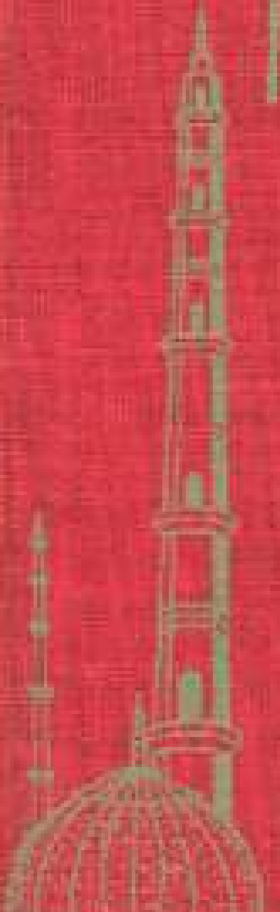
ISLAMIC FAITH & Practice



At the very outset, is should be understood clearly that the entire structure of the Islamic faith and Shariat (Holy Law) is built upon the teachings of the sacred Prophet (Peace be upon him) . These teachings are, in their turn, comprised exclusively of the knowledge and commands revealed to the Prophet by God, and are preserved to this day in their pristine purity in the Quran and the Tradition.

Broadly, the tenets of Islam can be divided into two parts, belief and practice. The first part consists of truths we are incapable of knowing independently and on our own. To believe in them is an essential condition of the faith. Constituting as they do, the doctrinal part of Islam, their importance is fundamental. In the second part are included practical instructions regarding human life and behaviour the dos and don'ts of individual and social existence-and it is further split up into a number of sub-divisions like worship, morality, social conduct, rights and duties, culture and civilization, support and propagation of religion, and politicsand Government. Islam, by virtue of its being a complete code of life, takes a due note of all the different aspects of our existence.

Belief, in the special terminology of Islam, means to believe in the Prophets of God as such, that is, to acknowledge that for our guidance God had vouchsafed to them knowledge that was beyond the range of our intelligence and nderstanding, and, on the basis of it, to affirm what was communicated to us by them as from God, and to accept religion brought by them as Divine religion. Thus, it is indispensable for the faithful that he holds as true all the things the Prophets have taught to mankind in their capacity as Divine messengers. By rejecting even one of them hewill cease to be a believer. For instance, if a person says that he believes in Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and the oneness of God and in his glorious Attributes as revealed in the Quran and the Traditions, but does not agree with what the Prophet has taught about the last day and Heaven and Hell because his reason revolts against it, he cannot be a Muslim.

In fine, to believe, in the religious sense, means to affirm in its entirety what the Prophets have brought from God, to accept and repose one's complete faith in all that

they have taught, preached or revealed in obedience to the Divine call and inspiration.

Among the basic requisites of faith there are some which appertain to truths like the nature of God and his Attributes, and others that are related to matters like the Prophet, the angels and the last day. We will take the former first because of the greater importance they command.

Belief in the existence of God as the creator, protector and preserver of the universe is the pivot on which the entire world of Faith revolves. History as well as the scriptures and other religious documents all over the world denote that faith in God has existed everywhere from the earliest days. This much has been accepted in common by all peoples and at all times that the world was brought into being by some power which was above all else. Perhaps it is for this reason that while in the Quran concepts like Divine unity are elaborated upon in the context of the teachings of the Prophets that were raised up from time to time in various communities, there is no indication that these Holy messengers took any particular pains to convince their people of the existence of God in itself. The Quran, too, has adopted, more or less, the same attitudein this respect. It is full of teachings regarding the Oneness of God and his other Attributes, but it makes no special effort to prove his existence or to persuade mankind to believe that there is a God and unless human nature undergoes a complete metamorphosis it should be as easy and natural for man to believe in the Existence of God as, let us say, in his own existence. In fact, even in these materialistic times, in the western contries themselves

which are the citadels of materialism, the number of people who do not believe. In Russia, too, where atheism is being pushed forward so Zealously by the ruling party as a matter of official policy the atheists are in a minority. It should, however, not be inferred from the above that the question of God-existence has been left severely alone by the Quran.Our object in drawing attention to it was only to show that since the existence of God was so manifestly self-evident and belief in it so deeply ingrained in the human nature, the Quran had not bestowed upon it as much attention as on other matters connected with Divinity, but had largely confined it who could think and understand. For example, take this verse

: " It is God who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead, and he is the one to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is God : then how are ye deluded away from the truth." (Quran : Inam,12)

Here, the Quran makes use of a familiar, everyday, phenomenon of nature-the germination and sprouting of the seed-to bring home the reality of the existence of God. It says that people constantly see that the seed-grain or date-stone is first buried under the earth, then it bursts and sends forth a tiny, slender shoot which pierces the earth and coms out on the surface to develop gradually into a full-grown plant or tree, as the case may be. The point for them to ponder over is whether all this the splitting of the seed under the earth according to a set design, its sprouting and the forcing of its way by the sprout, which is more delicate than a silken thread, through the hard layer of the

earth_happens by itself or in response to a Master will. TheQuran tells that it is God who does it all_ " It is God who caused the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout " and goes on to add that, in the same way, it is a common sight that the living things produce dead eggs instead of living young ones and from the eggs the young ones are hatched out. All these happenings bear witness to the glory of God. If, in spite of such clear evidences of his infinite power, any one does still not believe in God, he must, indeed, be blind.Or,take this verse :

" On the earth are signs for those of assured faith, as also in your own selves; will ye then not see? "(Quran:Zariyat,1)

The signs of God are scattered all over the earth and the skies for those who care to see. In fact, man himself is a vast wonder house of Divine workmanship. Let him think who chiselled his features in the mother's womb? Who gave him the eyes with which he sees, the ears with which he hears, the tongue with which he tastes and the nose with which he smells? Who gave him the faculty of speech? Who released the streams of milk from his mother's breast? Who controls his life and his death in the palm of his hand? Let him address these questions to himself and the answers will be that it all is the work of a Hidden, All powerful, Omniscient Agency, which is God.

" At another place, the Quran speaks in this wonderful, challenging manner: " Is there a doubt about God, the Creator of the Heavens and the earth? " (Quran : Ibrahim, 2)

That is, can anyone who lives on the earth and observes all that takes place on it and also sees the skies and the strange things they contain really be skeptical about the existence of the Creator of them all? Once I chanced to meet a person who had his doubts about the existence of God and wanted to have a discussion on them. I took out a piece of paper from my pocket and asked him would be believe if I said that the words appearing on it had not been written by anyone but had spring up by themselves. He replied that he would not. Again, I asked him what would his reaction be if I were to say that my watch or fountain pen had never known a manufacturer, having come up simply from nowhere or fallen into my lap straight from the blue, or that the motor car that was running on the road was without a driver and was avoiding collision, negotiating bends and moving along the right direction on its own judgment? He said that he would consider it all to be downright nonsense. I then said to him, " My friend, you are unwilling to believe that the words could get written of their own accord or the watch, the fountain pen and the motor car could came into being without a manufacture; then, how can you suppose that the sun and the moon which are functioning according to a set plan, and, what is still more amazing, the man himself with his mind and heart and eyes and ears and tongue came into existence, independently of a creator? Just as you cannot imagine otherwise than that what is written on the piece of paper has taken someone to write it or that the watch and the fountain pen are the handiwork of a manufacturer or that the motor car has been produced in a factory and it is running on the road, it is being driven by somebody, it is also plain and beyond dispute that this universe with all its sights and wonders, treasures and inhabitants, has not grown of itself but has been called into

creation by an All-Wise, All-Knowing, Omnipotent Being. To entertain a doubt about it or to make it a subject of controversy is to give proof of a diseased soul and a perverted mentality ".

In brief, the existence of God is not a matter of opinion. There can be no two views on it. It is both foolish and dangerous to make it an issue of theoretical disputations. It will simply complicate what actually is a very simple matter and lead to confusion and error. That is why, I believe, the Quran has in the main, taken it for granted and avoided a detailed discussion on it. Belief in God is grounded in the nature of man. It is rooted deep in his soul. Hence, the fact that atheism could never make much headway in the world; it could never engulf a substantial portion of humanity; and even those who profess to be atheists, the case often is that when a probe is made the spark of faith is found concealed in some corner of their hearts. But, with the concept of Divine unity it is different. It has been the undoing of many a people. In view of the extreme delicacy of the doctrine, all the Prophets have attached the greatest importance to it and made it the chief theme of their teachings.

In the Holy Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) specially, it has received the greatest attention. To appreciate fully the approach of the Quran and the traditions to Monotheism and the manner of their elucidation of it, it is advisable to bear in mind that only those fall a victim to the folly of ascribing plurality to God, who do not possess a full awareness of his attributes. People with a clear understanding of the Divine Attributes seldom succumb to the ignorance of polytheism. For instance, the preserver and the Sustained, He alone grants children and deals out life and death, health and sickness, poverty and richesing short, whatever happens in the world is at his bidding and of his doing : all are dependent on Him, he is dependent on no one-will naturally neither worship anyone besides the one God nor turn to him in the hour of one's need, nor will he ever seek to propitiate his good or avert his displeasure. Thus, one of the methods followed in the Quran and the traditions for explaining the creed of Monotheism and impressing it on the mind and the heart is to make known emphatically and in detail the characteristics of Divinity so that people may realise for themselves that when such is the majesty of God and so absolutely boundless His authority, no one but he can be worthy of worship and veneration. A striking instance of it is provided by Sura-i-Fatiha, First, the humble slaves are made to say :

"Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the World, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Ruler of the Day of Judgement."

Then, after having affirmed these Attributes of the Divine, they are called upon to declare :

" Thee do we worship and thine aid we seek." (That is, when God alone is the Cherisher and the Sustainer, and the Dispenser of our needs, and he is most Gracious, Most Merciful too, and togather with these beautiful, elegant qualities, he is also the Omnipotent, Almighty ruler who will deal out reward and punishment in the after-life, surely, He is the one we shall worship and to him

exclusively shall we supplicate for our needs).

At another place, as in Ayat-el-Kursi a more direct method has been made use of. The oneness of God is proclaimed as a positive, incontrovertible truth in the very beginning and it is declared that he alone is the supreme being, the Adored and the worshipped One, and then His Attributes are cited by way of proof and argument, the section of the Quran we have just indicated opens with these words, " God; There is no God except He"; it then, Proceeds to extol the Divine Attributes and to applaud the Divine Glory in the Following manner : "The Living. The Self-Subsisting, Eternal". (His life alone is his, the others are alive by his grace: their lives are transient : His eternal self is sustaining and preserving the universe); "No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep", (He is wide awake always, and there is not a moment when someone may beseech him for a thing and He may be in slumber or fast asleep); " His are all things in the Heavens and on earth" (He is the sole, absolute monarch of all that exists); " Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permiteth? " (No one can dare interpose with him for anyone except whome He allows); "He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) Before or after or behind; nor shall they compass aught of his knowledge except as He willeth, : (His knowledge is infinite : He knows what is apparent of His creatures as well as what is hidden: they, in fact, can know of nothing besides what he wills); and, finally, "His throne doth extend over the Heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for he is most high, the Supreme (in Glory).

in the same way, in Sura-i-Akhlas, the oneness of God is proclaimed at the outset: " Say : He is God, the One and only God:, and then such of his Attributes are set forth on knowing which a person himself arrives at the same conclusion : " The Eternal Absolute " (he is without want nor does He stand in need of anyone while everyone is in need of him); " He begeteth not, nor is he begotten and is none like him". This brief discussion was intended to open the way for an understanding of Monotheism and of the Quranic approach to it. A further point of vital importance in this context is that there is a degree of belief in Divine unity which is shared by a large number of polytheists as well, but in the eyes of Quran it is not enough. Many a Polytheist is found to admit that the creator of the Heavens and the earth and all that exists between them is but a single being; it is not that some things have been created by one power and the others by another. The Quran tells that this belief was cherished by the polytheists of pre-Islamic Arabia as well.With a slight variation of words it occurs repeatedly in it that if they (the Polytheists of pre-Islamic Arabia) were asked who was the creator of the universe they would say that it was God. If, indeed, thou ask them who has created the Heavens and the earth, and subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law), they will soon reply, "God".And not only that. They would even go further and admit that He was also the Dispenser of the World's workshop, the Cherisher and Sustainer, and the Owner of Life and Death. Thus, in Sura-i-Yunus we read :

Say: "Who is it that sustains you (in life) from the sky and the earth: Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and dead from the living: And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs? " They will soon say, "God".Where, then, did their fault lie? The Quran says that with all their faith in

Divine unity and Omnipotence, they supposed that whom they adored as deities had acquired a hand in the management of the world by virtu of the closeness of their association with the Almighty. They could, for instance, confer, if they liked, anything upon anyone or take it away from him, they could bestow riches on the poor and decree poverty for the rich, they could heal the sick, grant childless, and, so on. Consequently, They worshipped them, made their vows and oblations to they did all sorts of things for their appeasement to them, supplicated to them for their needs and circumambulated round their images. Therein lay their infidelity of the limits of true Monotheism. Such, indeed, has been the case with the majority of Polytheists everywhere. There have been very few among them who might have gone to the extent of attributing a colleague or partner to God in the creation and control of the universe. As far as we are aware, no polytheistic community has ever regarded its deities as co-equals of the Divine. About the polytheists of ancient Arabia, there is, as we have already seen, a clear evidence in the Quran to support our view. It says of them for instance on more than one occasion that when their boats were caught in a storm at the sea, and they were in danger of their lives, they at once forgot their deities and cried out only to God for help.

When distress seizes you at sea, you forget those that ye call upon-besides himself. (Quran : Bani Israel, 7) When a wave covers them like the canopy (of clouds), they call to God, offering him sincere devotion. (Quran : Luqman, 4) The prayer these Polytheists used to recite at the time of their paganish Haj also tells the same story. Its closing lines, as reproduced in the books of Traditions,read : " O God, here we are ; Thou hast no partner except those that are subservient to Thee. Thou art their Master ; they are the masters of none". ! In whatever way, the transgression of the Arab Polytheists was not that they venerated their deities as creators or sustainers or raised them, in any other sense, to a status of equality with the Almighty, but that, side by side with believing in him as the Omn-ipotent Being, they imagined that the deities also had a share in the exercise of Divine Power on account of their nearness to God, as a result of it, they idolized them and paid them religious homage. Since most of the polytheistic communities have been prone to err, more or less, similarly, the Quran has taken care to draw repeated attention to it.

" Yet have they taken, besides him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created; that have no control of hurt or good to themselves ; nor can they control life nor death nor Resurrection."

(O Prophet) say (to the Polytheists); "Call upon other (gods) whom ye fancy besides God; they have no power, _not even the weight of an atom,-in the Heavens or on earth; no (sort of) share have they therein, nor is any of them a helper of God. (Quran : Saba, 3)

And, again :
(O Prophet) say (to the Polytheists); "Call on those_besides him_ whom ye fancy : they have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them". (Quran : Bani Israel, 6)

In the last section of Sura-i-Yunus there appears, further, this energetic oration :
(O Prophet) say: "Oh ye men! If you are in doubt as to my religion, (behold!) I worship not what ye worship, other then God, but I worship God_who will take your souls (at death) ; I am commanded to be (in the ranks) of the Believers"; and further (thus) : "Set thy face towards Religion with true piety and never in any wise be of non-believers; nor call on any other than God;_such will neither profit thee nor hurt thee: If thou dost, behold! thou shall certainly be of those who do wrong. If God to touch thee with hurt there is none can remove it but he : if He do design some benefit for thee there is none can keep back his favour: He causeth it to reach whomsoever of his servants He causeth it to reach whomsoever of his servants He pleaseth. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". (Quran : Yunus, II)

Besides these, there are numerous other verses in the Quran to the effect that one can be a polytheist without actually imputingplurality to God. Monotheism implies that God is unique and has no like or equal or parallel not only in His nature and existence but also in his authority and attributes. It is, as such, absolutely imperative that both in the rendering of religious homage and in the imploring of help and assistance, no one should be associated with Him in any measure or manner.

We shall now see what objects were which the polytheists venerated as Divine, believing in them as the suppliers of their wants and the dispensers of their difficulties. The common belief is that they were mere images of stone. But the images were not the real deities : the real deities were the elevated souls and the Holy men whom the images symbolised. The Quran has given the names of some of the idols and the history books confirm that there did live in the past saints and spiritual leaders who bore those names. When these sacred men died, people carved imags of them and began to offer them their devotion. The later generations, in course of time, were misled by the Devil into taking them them up for regular worship. Likewise, the idols of the Polytheistic Arabs were regraded by them as typifying or representing certain spiritual personalities and the homage they paid to them was, in fact, paid to those whom they represented, just as when the Hindus-worship the images of Ram or Krishna, they worship the personalities of Ram and Krishna and not their images.

The images serve as aids to concentration and are held in reverence because of it. Nearer home, some ignorant and erring Muslims offer up oblations to the Tazias and even hang petitions on them and carry out so many other practices which are common to the polytheists without presuming any divinity in those helpless structures of bamboo and paper. All that is done In the name of Imam Hussain whose martyrdom the Tazias are supposed to recall. Some extremists, however, do go to the extent of believing them to be the whole thing. In the way, some among the Arab polytheists were so very foolish as to regard the idols carve by their own hands as the arbiters of their destinies and offered reverent homage to them in that spirit. To such people the Quran said : " Worship ye that which ye have (Yourselves) carved? " (Quran : Saffat, 3)And to those who did not to that extreme extent and worshipped certain real or imaginary spirits or spiritually exalted men as having control over gain and loss, and venerated the idols only as their symbols and the seats of their splendour, it addressed the following admonition :

"Verily those whom ye call upon besides God are servants like unto you." (Quran: A'raf, 24)In, Sura-i-Bani Israel they were assured confidently, once again, that the spirits, saints and mystics whom they idolized and worshipped were themselves the humble seekers of charity at the doorstep of their Lord, desirous of means of access to Him.And living all the time in the hope of his Mercy and the fear of His Wrath :

Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, _even those who are nearest, they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath. (Quran : Bani Israel, 6)Viewed against the background of these teachings, is it not an extremely lamentable truth that many of the Muslims, too, have degenerated into entertaining an identical belief in respect of their Sufi-saints and bow to their graves and perpetrate other polytheistic sins in relation to them?

It may will be asked here that if the polytheists honestly believed in the Almighty, and had not doubts His being the true Creator, Protector and preserver of the universe and the Great Provider of the daily bread, why at all did they bother to venerate the false deities, whom they accredited with no more than subordinate and subsidiary powers, and to place their needs, before them? This question can be raised in connection with the polytheists of old as well as the present-day idolaters and the Tazia-and-tomb-worshipping Muslims, and we have given our earnest consideration to it. In our opinion the chief reason for this was (and still is) the feeling that to please God and get one's petitions granted by him was a very testing task; it requuired one conscientiously to carry out his commands, to abstain from deceit, falsehood and the usurpation of the rights of others, to shun all unclean and wicked things and to lead a life of piety. As a sub-conscious reaction to this feeling the polytheists deceived themselves into putting their faith, apart from God, in certain real or fictitious personalities, the winning of whose good graces was only a mattre of prostrating oneself before their graves or images or the offering up of a few pieces worth of sweets and flowers. This, to our mind, represents the psychology of polytheism in a nutshell. To rescue people from this highly ruinous state of mind and belief what needs be done to instil into them, sedulously and unflaggingly, the great truth, besides God, nothing is in the hand of anyone, neither life, nor death, nor disease, nor health, nor poverty, nor riches; He has the power over all things, He alone can confer, the whole world is His servant.

Say : "Oh God! Lord of power (and Rule). Thou givest Power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off Power from whom Thou pleases: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleases, and Thou bringest low whom Thou Pleases : In Thy hand is all Good. Over all things Thou hast Power . Thou causest the night to gain on the Day, and Thou causest the day to gain on the night ; Thou bringest the Living out of the Dead, and Thou bringest the Dead, out of the Living, and givest sustenance to whom Thou pleases with out measure." (Quran : A'le-Imran.3)Or, take this one :

" In whose hands is the dominion of all things. " (Quran : Yasin, 5)Or, this :" To Him belong the Keys of the Heavens and the Earth. " (Quran : Shura, 6)

Or, this :

" What God out of his Mercy doth bestow on mankind there is none can withhold : What He doth withhold, there is none can grant, apart from Him. "(Quran:Fatir,1)Such is the method of the Quran. Over and Over again it seeks to hammer into the minds of the polytheists that it is sheer nonsense and a folly of the first order to believe that there exists anyone other then God who can make or mar their fortunes or exercise control over their lives in any other way. It is a mere Satanic deception. God alone is the Ruler of the Heavens and the Earth, and in full command of hurt and good. So, it is solely to Him that they should supplicate and offer reverent devotion.

At this stage, there are two things that call for attention. Firstly, what worship is, to render which to anyone besides God constitutes an act of Polytheism? And, secondly, in this world of cause and effect there are many things we take recourse to in order to satisfy our needs, e.g., we drink water to quench our thirst, derive heat and light from the sun and take medicine to overcome illness; further, we go to various persons on various occassions to seek their help_we go to the doctor when we are ill and to the Lawyer when we are involved in a law-suit_and we take service from our servants; so also do the weak look to the strong and the poor to rich for succour; is this all also polytheistic? To take the second question first, as everyone knows, the things in which God has vested certain properties_the property of slaking thirst, in water, of giving forth light and warmth in fire and the sun, of curing diseases in medicines_have no choice, opinion, power, will or authority in the matter of their action. God has subjected them to our use. No question of polytheism arises, therefore, in availing ourselves of them.

Their position is equivalent to that of our servants and errandboys and when we put them to our use it is in no other way. Similarly, no harm attaches to our taking advantage of the services of men, like doctors and lawyers, whom God has endowed with any particular ability to be useful to their fellow-beings. We all know that there is no Divine or Heavenly power in them, they command nothing on their own and are as helpless before God as ourselves. All that there is to it is that they have been blessed with a certain type of knowledge or skill which can be of benefit to us in certain circumstances in this world of ours where all things have an apparent cause. Polytheism occurs when it is believed about someone that he operates outside the normal functioning of the forces of nature, in his own right and of his own will, and supplications are made and worship is offered to him on the basis of that belief. Worship in Islam denotes acts of reverence like bowing, kneeling, touching the ground with the forehead, circumambulations, vows, oblations and sacrifice one carries out to propitiate the good and avert the anger of someone about whom one believers that he is supernaturally in command of the power to do harm or good and to grant petitions.

Such reverences is due only to God. If it is offered in respect of anyone it is emphatically polytheistic. We have so far confined ourselves to and examination of true Polytheism about which it has been candidly stated in the Quran that it is a mortal sin and as highly fatal to salvation as the very denial of God and the Apostles. But, in the shariat, certain other things, such as, the swearing of an oath to anyone besides God, the

putting of faith in the superstitious hocus-pocus, and vanity, that are exectly not polytheistic, but bear a close resemblance to polytheism, or pave the way for it, are also often denounced as such. These, however, constitute Polytheism of a lesser degree. That is why, there is a term among the Ulema (Muslim theologians)_'polytheism without being a polytheist'_meaning that one can be guilty of polytheism without actually being a polytheist. Some Holy men who have attained perfection of faith in Divine unity even go to the extent of regarding attachment to worldly things as a manifestation of polytheism.

With them, love for money, love for power, love for one's family_if it in any way interferes with man's devotion to God_are all basically polytheistic. But it does not mean that they bracket them with polytheism of the same class as idolatry. It only shows that these things run contrary to Monotheism in its highest sense. In modern time the cultural and intellectual influence of the West has, to a greater or lesser degree, succeeded in breaking the hold of ancient polytheism_thriving as it was wholly on superstition and ignorance_on the minds of the people.Now no educated person, with a capacity for independent thinking, finds any sense in the worship of idols, stars, rivers, trees and animals. He may still be carrying it on, but it is only by force of convention or as a part of his cultural heritage. In his heart, he has lost faith in it. At the same time, however, the West has sculptured a number of new idols and circulated them all over the world as substitutes for the older deities.

These new idols, which are now the objects of universal veneration, are the state, the national prestige, wealth, political power, and so forth. There is nothing objectionable, of course, in being loyal to one's country. It is a natural sentiment, and, within certain limits, Islam, too, has enjoined it. It is also perfectly legitimate to desire a decent and comfortable living for oneself provided that it is earned in a clean, honourable manner and witout encroaching upon the rights of others. The same applies to aspiring for political ascendancy. If the aims be pure, and the ideals high, like the promotion of peace and justice and the advancement of public welfare, there is no harm whatever in it. The Prophets never forbade such pursuits and activities. On the contrary, they have sanctioned them and laid down definite rules for our guidance with regard to them. But, now-a-days, these things have assumed an importance which is far in excess of what they deserve. They have been elevated into gods. The enhancement of national power and prestigehas become an article of faith with the modren world and nothing is permitted to stand in its way.

Truth, justice and morality are being sacrificed ruthlessly at the altars of the state and the nation. So also have the stomach and the pocket become the most popular objects of veneration. They are being worshipped as deities and are a law unto themselves. Religious and ethical obligations have lost all their meaning in the context of them. Worship of the state, nation, government and pocket and stomach is the new polytheism of the new age for which, too, there is no place in the Islamic pattern of things. To all the Polytheists, old or new, our answer is : " We are clear of you and of whatever ye worship besides God." (Quran:Mumtahana, 1)At the root of all false and misconceived worship lies the worship of the self. To care nothing for the commands of God before

our own selfish interests and sensual desires is the source of all evil. The biggest idols are own inordinate appetites.

I have observed about many present-day spiritual leaders of exceptional excellence that they lay a special stress on this aspect of the question while explaining the meaning of the Kalima. In their view, what La Ilah-a-Il-Allah basically demands of us is to conduct ourselves not according to the dictates of our will but according to dictates of God. In the Quran, also sensual desires and impulses have on an occasion been referred to as Ilah (meaning'God'). Seest thou such a person as taketh for his God his own passion (or impulse)? (Quran : Furqan, 4)It will, thus be seen that a person who obeys his wishes and inclinations to the disregrad of the Divine injunctions deifies his own 'self' and worships it instead of God. A tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) reads. " Your deadliest enemy is your own 'self' which lies between your sides."

Let La Ilah-a-Il-Allah, then, be our instrument for the repudiation of all the things which may contain the remotest possibility of assuming to themselves the status of divinity, and for, guarding ourselves agains the least encroachment by polytheism in any from or manner ; let it be the means to the attainment of perfection by us in our belief in Monotheism because just as nothing is more repugnant to God than the ascribing of plurality to Him, faith in his unity, Oneness and uniqueness is the very life-breath of religion. Since Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the last of the Prophets and no other Divine Apostle is going to be raised up after him, God has brought the concept of Monotheism to its highest degree of evolution and completion through him so that now it has become totally fortified even against a suspicion of contamination by polytheistic untruths. All the paths through which the devil could possibly bring them in have been firmly blocked. The greates danger in this connection was that like the Christians who had slipped into the folly of attributing Divinity to jesus, the Muslims might also be misguided into entertaining Polythesistic notions about the pesonality of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) . The Prophet, accordingly missed no opportunity to eliminate the possibility of it. He never tried of warning his followers against the evil and the imprudence of associating exaggerated feelings of respect and veneration with him.

He said : "Do not utter such exaggerated words of praise for me as the Christians do for the Prophet jesus, the sun of Mary. I am nothing more than a servant of God and His Apostle. So, call me only that." And : " Some communities before you had converted the graves of their Prophets into objects of worship. you must not do so Beware, I have warned you." In the same vein was the following prayer of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) . " O God ; Do not let my grave be made into an idol to which worship may be offered. " It is reported in the Traditions that some Companions of the Prophet happened to go to a foreign land where they saw that when the citizens went to their chief they prostrated themselves before them. On returning home they related their experience to the the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and begged his permission to do the same by him.

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) asked them, " Would you postrate yourselves before my grave after my death? " The Companions knowing full well that prostration before a

grave could never be permissible in Islam promptly replied that they would not. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) then said, " When you know that I am a mere man and one day I will die and be buried in the grave after which even you will not consider me worthy of that reverence, why should you show it to me in my lifetime? " To a similar request by Salman of Persia, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, " (Then) don't prostrate yourself before me. Keep it for Him who can be touched neither by decay nor death " But Polytheism is a far cry. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) did never allow the Companions to stand up in his presence as a mark of respect to him. All these precautions were aimed solely to keep polytheism at arm's length from the Muslims. Typical, also, of the Prophet's prudent foresight and his earnest concern to make Islam safe for all time against polytheistic infiltrations is the following incident. It so happened that on the day the Prophet's infant son, Ibrahim, died their occured a total eclipse of the sun and it grew quite dark.

The Prophet feared that, under the influence of the former superstitious beliefs, people might be persuaded to think that the event was the outcome of the bereavement he had suffered. He, thereupon, summoned the Muslims immediately offering the Prayer prescribed for such an occasion, in which the virtues of God were extolled, addressed them in these words : " Surely, the sun and the moon are the two signs of Allah, and they do not suffer eclipse of the birth or death of anyone."

Every conceivable precaution has been taken by the Shariat against the creeping in of Polytheistic beliefs and practices into the body of the Islamic faith. As an example of it, Muslims are forbidden to offer Namaz at sunrise, mid-day and sunset so that there may be nothing in common between them and the fireworshippers in the mater of faith, even outwardly, and no misunder standing may arise, Further, kneeling and touching the ground with the forehead are an essential feature of the Namaz. No Namaz can be completed without them. Yet, they have been omitted from the funeral Namaz for the simple reason that the participants might not have an occasion to suppose that they were kneeling and prostrating themselves before the dead body. How utterly sad and shocking really is the victory of the Devil that Polytheistic modes of thought and behaviour, which have been the ruin of the earlier communities, are now stealing in among the

Among the transcendental truths we are called upon to believe live in, as a matter of fundamental necessity, one is concerning the Hereafter. 'Faith in God', as in the following two verses. As believe in God and the Last Day.

(_Quran : Baqar, 22)
If they have faith in God and the Last Day.

(_Quran : Baqar, 15)Faith in the Hereafter implies, in a word, placing of one's complete trust in the revelation made by the Prophets that, at the end of this mortal life, there is to come another life and another world in which men will be required for the good or evil

they might have done during their earthly sojourn.

On the subject of the further world, this much, at least, can be realized by everyone, without any external persuasion, that there ought to be some existence on the other side of death for men to reap the consequences of their doings in material life. We see around us people who, in spite of all their cruelty and wickedness, spend their days in utmost comfort and happiness. Throughout there lives they commit great sins, they loot and plunder and deprive others of their justified claims, they oppress the weak and torment the poor, and yet no calamity befalls them and they live in uninterrupted peace and luxury till the end of their time. At the same time, there are men who are pious and virtuous, they neither deceive nor swindle nor subject anyone to cruelty or injustice, they are loyal to God and his creatures, and, with all this their lives are filled with pain and poverty.

Some- times there is disease, sometimes some other distress till the journey's end is reached. Now, When this world is of God's creation and He sees everything, and we, on our part, find that here neither the virtuous are rewarded for their virtue nor the wicked punished for their sins, it automatically comes to our minds that reward and punishment from God should then be meted

out in some other existence. It cannot be that God allows such gross injustice, which makes no distinction between right and wrong and treats the righteous and the wrong-doers alike. What to speak of him, such conduct would not be worthy of an ordinary gentleman. Says He : Shall we, then, treat (alike) the people of faith with the people of Sin? (Quran:Qalam, 2) Furthermore, everything in the world is endowed with some properties and the capacity to produce a certain reason. So also do all physical act of a man bring about, as a matter of course, some reciprocal responsive effects within himself : when he eats his appetite is appeased as a natural consequence of the act; when he drinks his thirst is quenched; over-eating gives him indigestion; and when he swallows poison, it kills him. And his normal and spiritual acts being manifestly of a much greater signi ficance than the physical ones, it is impossible that they may not react upon him one way or the other, and produce no results, good or evil, for him. A man gives his food or drink to the needy and goes without it himself, takes care of the sick, the indigent, the orphan and the widow, and spends his hard earned money on them, and along with it, he is also a devout person, he worships God and follows his commands faithfully; how, on earth, it be acceptable to human or conscience that these noble deeds of his should bear no fruit, or that the fruit they bore should not be of higher qualityand merit than those borne out by his physical doings?

Conversely, a man is cruel and unkind; he tyrannizes over the weak and the powerless, is treacherous and a cheat, accepts bribe, commits robbery or sheds blood without reason; in brief, he is an embodiment of all that is despicable and foul; common sense will naturally demand that the consequences of his misdeeds should be equally worse and that they should reveal themselves in due course. When a person cannot make the slightest material folly and get away with it, there seems no reason why it should be different on the moral and spiritual planes. The same process of reasoning has been

pursued in the Quran in this verse : What! do those who seek after evil ways think that we shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds,_that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgement they make. (Quran : Jathiya, 2)In short, as we observe on all sides, that the effects of the material and physical acts of man make themselves felt in this world while his moral and spiritual behaviour yields no apparent results, we become conscious of the need of a future state where it may bear fruit in the shape of reward or punishment.

The great wisdom behind this arrangement is that if requital for good or evil was to be portioned out in this life, it would cease to be the trial God has intended it to be and which reason he has made it known through the Prophets that those who will obey His commands and lead a life of piety will be rewarded in the world to come with such-and-such blessings and those who will behave otherwise will be punished in such-and-such ways. Were the recompense for every good or evil deed to be handed over at once, the trial would be reduced to a farce, and reward and punishment would lose all meaning for people would then avoid sin as fearfully as they do plunging into the fire, and practice virtue as a matter of habit like eating and drinking. Morever, the favours God proposes to bestow upon his loyal servants cannot be possible in this material world. In the same way, it cannot withstand the terrible Chastisement he has in store for those who are defiant and go astray. The chastisement is so serve that if it is revealed here it will destroy all the peace and happiness there is in the world and burn it down to extinction.

This world is, after all, a weakling and its resources are grievously limited. Again, the pattern of things here is such that joys and sorrow are closely woven into each-other, whereas the reward God has designed for the faithful and the dreadful punishment He has got ready for the transgressors can be possible only in surroundings, respectively, of cloudless bliss and unmitigated suffering. Anyhow, it is the will of God that he will requite His servants for their deeds in the next world. That world is the Hereafter and it is divided, into two parts, Heaven and Hell. In the Heaven there will be the display of God's special Grace and Benevolence and in the Hell of his Severity and warth, and both of these displays will be in their highest forms. It is only there that the Divine Glory will reveal itself in full splendour. For the full exhibition of Divine Benevolence and Anger, too, therefore, it is necessary that there be another existence with its Heaven and Hell because though these attributes are revealed here in this world also, it is on a very limited scale.

The material world cannot cope with an unrestricted display of his qualities. In this display, indeed, lies the very purpose of creation. God has fashioned all that exists in order that His excellent Attributes may find expression. If the possibility of a future world be ruled out, how is this purpose going to be fulfilled? For this reason, also, the Hereafter becomes a necessary. In addition to these things, the Hereafter plays a powerfull role in the reformation of our lives. No one with any knowledge of history or capacity for thinking can deny that no human arrangement or farmula of righteous conduct has succeeded in discouraging people more effectively from evil doing than the belief in futurity. Punitive legislation, cultural advancement, moral consciousness and such-like things do help in the suppression of crime and immorality, but they are not as

striking in their usefulness as faith in reward and punishment after death, provided of course, that this faith is a real, live one and not a meaningless formality. it is no empty concept of philosphy but a fact supported by the experience of the ages that the more bereft a society is of faith in futurity and God's last judgement, the more open is it to folly and sin. People in whose hearts the light of faith does burn shrink back from the thought of evil. History tells that the cleanest, purest and noblest lives have been those of men who were charged with a glowing faith in Resurrection and the final Requital.

This conviction acts as a strong deterrent even when there is no one to see or to punish. So, the setting up of another world at the end of the present one in a reality as promised by the Divine Apostles, as well as a necessity according to our own understanding and it is to our own advantag to believe in it. The details about the world of Requital can, however, only be known through the Prophets. It is beyond the realm of controversy that all the Prophets during their lifetime imparted to their people what they needed knowing about God's Final Judgement and Heaven and Hell, but their followers did not pay enough attention to the preservation of their teachings with the result that much of what they preached was either lost or driven out of shape with the passage of the centuries. Now the only authentic knowledge available to us is that supplied by the last of the Prophet, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him), and the Quran, which is maintained intact to this day, and contains nothing that may be repugnant to logic or reason. It is another matter that since we have no personal knowledge or experience of the future world, the idea of it may sound to us rather strange.But it is exactly like this that is if it could be possible, by any means, to tell a child which was still in its mother's womb that it was about to come out into a world that was thousands of times larger, with its vast stretches of land and sea and in which there was the measureless sky, the sum, the moon and the stars, and where the railway trains ran, the airplanes flew and wars were fought and atom bombs dropped, it would, surely, be very difficult for it to lend credence to it all for the simple

reason that the world it had known so far was but the tiny pouch within the belly of its mother. It is just the same with us about the world to come. It is a fact that the future world will be as immeasurably more extensive and advanced compared to the present one as the present one is compared to mother's womb, and just as, on comming into the world, the child sees with its own eyes every thing it could never dream of in the narrow cell of the mother's belly, we also will see in the further state all that the prophets have told about it. In sum, the description of the hereafter given by the Prophets is entirely true and with out the semblance of an error or mis statement. Faith and common sense, both, demand that we should repose our whole-hearted trust in it. In the customary course, in matters we are ingorant about we go by the advice of those whose wisdom and integrity are above suspicion in our eyes. We, accordingly, affirm our fullest faith in what the Holy Prophet and the Quran have told us about the intervening period between death and Resurrection, about the happenings in the grave, and about the rising again of men on the last day, God's final Judgement and Heaven and Hell, and believe with all our hearts that all this will come to pass exactly as they have said. This is what affirmation of faith in the Hereafter means. Needless to add, that, after having brought faith in God and the Hereafter, it becomes our bounden duty to discard the undisciplined

life of the animals and devote ourselves earnestly to a life of submission and surrender to God in order that our maker and master, who does hold everything in the palm of his hand, may be benevolently inclined towards us and we may succeed in everting His wrath in the never-ending existence of the Futurity and in gaining that paradise and those other exquisite favours He has so graciously promised to his Loyal servants.

Prophecy And Apstleship

Having brought faith in God and the Hereafter, and realized the paramount importance of leading life of devotion and loyalty unto him, it becomes our duty now to enquire what his commands are for us what things does he allow and what things does he forbid. God, obviously, does not communicate His will to everyone individually. The limited wisdom that has been granted to us may suffice us, to a greater or lesser extent for the everyday needs of the world, but it is quite incapable of uncovering for us the pleasure of God so that we can know for ourselves what he requires of us and order our lives accordingly. For this, God founded the institution of Prophethood, i.e., exactly the way He called into being the sun in order that we may obtain heat and light from it and set into operation the cycle of crops to provide us with nourishment,

He, solely for our sake, gave rise to the prophetic order and decided to send us his commands and instructions through the agencyof chosen Apostles. Hence, Prophethood and the Divine law (Shariat) are in fulfilment of our own needs and prompted entirely by his Supreme Mercifulness and providential care. Those who consider them to be an irksome burden placed on the shoulders of humanity by a selfwilled despot are hopelessly in the wrong. They, indeed, are a great blessing and it is through them that man's destiny will be worked out and he will attain fulfillment. About the nature of the Prophets there has been a great deal of misunderstanding among different peoples. Some have gone even to the extent of calling them the incarnations of God, as if when a monarch decides to issue an edict to his people, he also becomes his own messenger and serves it personally from door to door, Such people labour under an utterly misconceived notion of Divinity. Glory to thy Lord. The Lord of honour and Power, (he is free) from what they ascribe (to him). (_Quran : Safa't 5)

Some, again, thought that the Prophets should be from among the angles, since the angles were celestial beings and belonged to a most holy class among God's creatures. But they forgot that, equally with holyness, or even more, it was necessary for them to be able to appreciate the disposition, needs and aspirations of those for whose guidance they were sent down into the world. The angels, holy as they were, could never be expected to think and feel like men. They could never associate themselves fully with humanity.

There are states in a man's existence of which he remains unaware until he himself passes through them. For example, a man who is wholly lacking in sexual power from birth can never know what it really means. Or, person who has never dreamt a dream cannot be made to comprehend exactly what it is like. With external impression and experiences, it is not different. One who has not eaten a mango can never conceive of its taste and flavour, nor can a man born blind ever be taught the superb beauty of a rose. It

needs a man to understand properly the thoughts and sentiments of men, and those who are intended to serve as guides and models for humanity must of necessity be entirely human in respect of their physical and mental attributes or else their mission will remain unfulfilled. Thus, God always raised up His Prophets from human beings alone and administrated his admonition to those who insisted that they must belong to the class of the angles : Say : "Had there been in the earth angels alone walking as setters, We would certainly have sent down to them from the Heaven and angel as an Apostle. (Quran : Bani Israel, 11)

In other words, an Apostle must belong to the same species as those for whose guidance he is raised up. Had angels been living in the world instead of men, God would certainly have sent down an Angel Apostle for there instruction, but since it is the human beings who inhabit it and it is their guidance that is in view, this duty cannot properly be discharged by a teacher who is not one of them. A man Apostle alone can understand the needs and inclinations of men and it is only his guidance that can succeed among them. The entire concept of Prophethood is rendered meaningless as soon as we accept the Prophets as Gods or sons of God or gods incarnate or angels.

The lives of the Apostles cease to be of any help to us once the magic patterns of supernaturalism are woven aroud them. They cannot serve as our ideals. We can follow only him who is a man of a like fashion as ourselves. To expect us to receive an angel as the model for our conduct is to expect from us to go beyond the limits of our humanity. More, all the excellence in the lives and achievements of the Prophets dwindles and loses its importance once we presume Divinity in them or begin to regard them as angles. What an inspiring example of human loftiness does the character or jesus present if we look at a man? There is in it a splendid assemblage of calm endurance of pain, forbearance, gentleness, humility, piety, love, selflessness and wisdom, and, then, there are miracles, as granted to him by God, to lend a striking proof to his Apostleship. But if we take him for God, we will immediately notice shocking blemishes in his life. Then the fact of his being born out of the womb of Mary, his eating and drinking, the torture and persecution he suffered at the hands of the Jews, and, finally, (according to the Bible) his crucifixion will seem not achievements but failings, and no according for them will be possible either.Even his miracles on earth will lose all their marvelous quality and uniqueness, for don't we see much greater manifestations of Divine power around us day in and day out? An Angel Apostle could come only to angels. He could not be an ideal for us, much less a son of God or a God incarnate. We need a teacher who belongs to the same species as ourselves and is not dissimilar to us in nature, power and capabilities. The truth that the Prophets God sent down to us were all nothing else but human beings is expounded in the Quran in these words : Nor did we send before thee (as Apostles) any but men who we did inspire. (Quran : Yusuf, 12)

The Prophet himself was made to proclaim repeatedly that he was but a man among men whom God had raised up as His Apostle. "Am I aught but a man and an apostle." (Quran : Bani Israel, 1) Say : "I am but a man like yourselves, but the inspiration has come to me that your God is one God." (Quran : Kahf, 7)The Quran has attached such great importance to the subject to the humanity of the Prophet that it has assumed the status of

an artice of faith with the Muslims. In Islamic theology, a Prophet is defined as "a man God raises up to reveal and impart his message and guidance to his servants and entrusts him with the responsibilities of an Apostle." The long line of Prophets began with the beginning of the human race ever since man started his career on the earth, God is the universal Cherisher and sustainer, has been ministering to his spiritual needs as he has been to his physical needs. He sent down, through special Messengers, His word to all countries and communities. It is not possible to give the exact number of the Prophets; the Quran does not mention it nor was it necessary. But it is stated it clearly and with all the emphasis one can imagine that no nation and no people have been left without a Divine Messenger having been sent to them.

"To every people (was sent) an Apostle." (Quran : Yunus, 5) And there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past) (Quran : Fatir,3) For we assuredly sent among every people an Apostle. (Quran : Nahl, 5)The names of some of the Prophets and their brief descriptions occur at various places in the Quran while those of the rest havebeen left out. But it is imperative that we believe in the truth and the unstained virtuousness of all the sacred Apostles of God and hold them in equal respect. Without it, it is not possible to be Muslim.

We make no distinction between one and another of his Apostles. (Quran:Baqara, 40) Indispensable, as it is, for the faithful to believe in all the Prophets of God, obedience can be rendered only to the Prophet of the day whose teachings alone are valid and binding. It is so because the Law a Prophet brings is not of his own authorship but directly from God, and it is his will that only those commands of his should be obeyed which he has sent down for that particular time. A new enactment supersedes all previous enactment. Let us make use of an illustration. Suppose a people who are extremely weak and backward chance to come under the sway of an enlightened ruler. If the ruler wants to introduce reform among them, he is bound to take a graduated course. He will begin with nothing more than elementary enactment and then as the people will become a little more advanced he will bring in a more complete set of rules, and, so on. Now, if after a new law has been promulgated, some of the citizens insist on following the older one they will be brought to book for showing disloyalty to the realm. The same is true also for the Divine Laws brought by the Prophets. God formulates His law according to the circumstances prevelent in the community or in the age in which the prophet is raised up. when the circumstances undergo a change, the providence causes another Deliverer to appear with suitable amendments made in the law. It then becomes the duty of the people to conduct their lives according to the amendment law while stillholding in respect the earlier Prophet and the earlier law (since all the Prophets and all the holy laws are from the one and the same God), so much so that if it could be possible for the earlier Prophet to rise from his grave and come back to the world, even he would have to adhere to the current Law. The Prophet is reported to have observed that, "If the Illustrious Apostle, Moses, were alive today, he too would be following the Divine Law brought by me."

According to the Traditions, when jesus will return to the earth, during the last phase, he will abide by the shariat of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) which is the standing

Divine Law, all previous Shariats having been withdrawn by God Himself. To owe allegiance to the out dated Shariats would be an act of disobedience. It is, thus, apparent that the Prophets are not the makers of the Holy Law; they are only its revealers and interpreters. They only impart and communicate what God bids them to without venturing to make the slightest alteration in the Divine message : The Quran tells at various places of the pagans of Mecca that they often used to say to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) if he could remove of modify certain features of the new faith he taught, they would willingly join him. The Prophet's reply would always be that his mission lay only in conveying the message of God as it was revealed to him.

He was not competent to amend or to alter it as he pleased. Say : "It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it: I follow not but what is revealed unto me." (Quran : Yunus,2)"Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) Desire. It is not less than inspiration sent down to him. " (Quran : Najm, 1)In the event of there being no clear guidance from God about a particular matter, the Prophets used to exercise their own judgement, but not independently of the principles revealed to them earlier. They deliberated on the issue in the light of the previous revelations and arrived at a decision against their background. This is called Ijtehad. Generally, the Ijtehad of the Prophets used to be correct, but if they ever erred, they were admonished through a Divine revelation and the mistake was set right immediately. If no admonition was received from above, it was inferred that the judgement of the Prophet was in conformity with the Divine will. The decision was then regarded as 'near revelation', and not a product of Prophet's Ijtehad, and it was shown the same respect as a Divine command.

The Question of Ijtehad by the Imams, to which a passing reference may also be made here, does, obviously, not arise in respect of matters that have already been dealt with in the Quran and the Traditions. But, sometimes, there occur situations which have been left undermined by the two sources, and, then, our jurists are called upon to make use of the authority of Ijtehad and determine laws applicable to them, or formulate new ones if necessary, against the background of the foundational principles of Islamic jurisprudence and legislation. It is narrated in a Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that when Ma,ad was appointed the governor of Yeman, the Prophet asked him how he would decide matters coming up before him, "I will judge matters according to the book of God", said Ma,ad. "If the book of God contains nothing to guide me, I will act on the precedents of the Prophet of God, and if the precedents also fail, I will exert to form my own judgment " .

The Prophet is said to have been most pleased at the reply. The Principle of Ijtehad by the Imams is considered to have its roots in this Tradition. All the Companions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) who had the good fortune to acquire proficiency in jurisprudence and legislation under his care and guidance took recourse to the right of Ijtehad when a need arose. Then, from the middle of the 1st Century A.H., Muslim legists came forward to work ceaselessly for the evolution of a systematic legal thought. They studied carefully the groundwork of legal principles in the Quran, and the precedents established by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), and the jurist Companions, and evolved, on the basis of the vast knowledge thus gathered, the

fundamental principle of legislation in Islam. Therefrom, they proceeded to frame laws for all the situations and circumstences the Quran and the Traditions had not distinctly defined. Thus came about the systematization and the codification of the Mohammedan Law. Several schools of Law and jurisprudence had appeared in Islam during that period of intense juristic activity, but four of them became more popular probably because they were more methodical in their approach and possessed greater comprehen siveness. It is important to note that Ijtehad is not every body's meat.

The early doctors who availed themselves most of the privilege were exceptionally well-versed in the book and the sunnah, having had the unique advantage of sitting at the feet of the Companions or their favourite pupils and learning Islamic theology directly from them. In addition, they were also conspicuous for religious earnestness and piety and seemed eminently fitted, in every way, for the great service God took from them. Nowadays, unfortunately, Ijtehad has come to be regarded as child's play and anyone with nothing more than a nodding acquaintance with Islam acquired through reading a few Urdu pamphlets or a translation of the Quran, feels himself entitled to have a go at it, and passes his verdict on religious matters with all the self-assurance of a Mujtahid. It is of such people that a Tradition says, "Transgressors themselves, they lead others into transgration. To come back to our subject, Prophecy is hundred per cent a Divine gift and not an acquirement. There are certain things in the world, e.g., skill in arts, letters, sience and agriculture, which, though they emanate ultimately form God, are dependent, to an extent, on application and industry.

These faculties are described as acquirements. In the same way, there are things which are altogather a natural beauty, inborn intelligence and shrewdness may be said to fall within this category. These are called Divine gifts, and Prophecy is one of them. It cannot be acquired. We will now take up the miracles. Sometimes events of a supernatural import make themselves manifest through the agency of the Prophets. which are outside the powers of ordinary man. These events are known as miracles. But a miracle is not the act of the Prophet through whom it may occur; it is an act of God who causes it to happen through the medium of his Messenger to demonstrate the truth of his mission. The Prophet is only a vehicle for the presentation of the spectacle; he is not its author. Some people operate at such a low level of intellectual and spiritual comprehension that they fail to be convinced of a Prophet's inspiration unless he performs some supernatural deeds before them. It is for their satisfaction that God confersmiracles upon his Apostles. Otherwise, those who are blessed with a wholesome nature and possess enough good sense have no need of the marvels to testify to the veracity of a Prophet's claim. To them the life of a Prophet and his mission are in themselves a miracle. None, Perhaps, among the leading Companions waited for the Prophet to perform a miracle before they brought faith in his Apostleship. Miracles, hence, are not a necessity with the Prophets or with Prophet hood, but with the unintelligent and the uninformed.

It is quite possible that a Prophet may not show a single miracle or that a Prophet of a more exalted position is granted fewer miracles that a Prophet of a lesser importance for the reason that resistance to truth is greater among the people in which the later is raised

up. A miracle is neither an act of the prophet, nor and essential complement of prophethood, nor a criterion of superiority. It is a sign of God which, as we have said earlier, He reveals when he pleases and as the need be to establish the genuineness and validity of the inspiration of His Apostles. Only God can make the miracles happen, the Prophets being utterly helpless in the matter. The more mischievous and stubborn among the pagans of meca were accustomed to challenge the Prophet (peace be upon him) to show them one miracle on another if he really was a Divine Apostel. In reply the Prophet (peace be upon him) would always tell them that he neither possessed the faculty to work miracles nor laid any claim to it. He was only a Messenger. Say : "Glory to my Lord; Am I aught but a man,_an Apostle?" (Quran : Bani Israel, 10)When had he said that he was anything more than a man that they demanded of him supernatural deeds? Say : "The signs are indeed with God." (Quran : Ankaboot, 5)Miracles were beyond his control ; they were in the hands of God who alone could show them.

While on the topic of miracles may also examine Karamat and Istedraj. In the manner God, sometimes, causes a miracle to reveal it self at the hands of his Apostles, He makes supernatural deeds flow some devoted and deep-hearted followers of the Apostles as will. These deeds Karamat as they are called_are no more the personal acts of the individuals through whom they are worked out as the miracles are of theology and Tsawwuf, Karamat is defined as "an astonishing and supernormal deed that may come to pass through the instrumentality of an individual whose life is openly one of virtue and righteousness." The measuring yard for piety and righteousness in Islam being the Shariat, the term Karamat is applied only to extra ordinary events that occur through a person conforming to that standard. Removed from piety and moral uprightness and the observance of the Shariat, there can be no holiness and no Karamat. The Quran is very clear about it. Behold; Verily on the friends of God there is no fear nor shall they grieve; those who believe and (constantly) guard against evil (i.e. pledge faith in the Prophet of the day and fear God and observe His Shariat). (Quran:Yunus, 7)

Sometimes, deeds of a supernatural character happen to be wrought by men who, clearly, do not fulfil the conditions of moral and spiritual rectitude as laid down by the shariat. Such deeds, if they do not belong to the realm of prestidigitation, are termed as Istedraj, i.e., they are trial prescribed by God for testing the faith of His servants, like the means of the imposter, Dajjal, who, as the Traditions have it, will command that rain to fall and revive the dead for all to see, and, thus, play havoc with the spiritual values of men. We have, accordingly, the advice of Bayazid Bustami never, never, to believe in the spiritual merit of anyone, even though he displays the capacity to work wonders to the extent of flying in the air (unaided by any mechanical device), unless it is known for certain about him that he observes the divine commands with scrupulous care, and, regulates bis life strictly as demanded by the Holy law.
Karamat is not at all a necessary attribute of Wilayat (spiritual excellence).

In a majority of cases, in fact, it is the older way round. An outstanding Wali may not perform a single supernatural deed in his life whereas any number of them may be shown by another of a lesser caliber. The real test of spiritual greatness is piety than which no virtue is dearer in the eyes of God. It is not a religious obligation to believe in

a saint as such. Nevertheless, to bear a grudge against those whose saintly state is a popularly accepted fact or to treat them (or their memory, if they be dead) with disrespect is a source of great misfortune. There is a celestial Tradition to the effect that anyone who harbors a feeling of hostility against a Wali should consider himself to be at war with God. Our attitude towards all saintly men should be one of reverence notwithstanding any difference of opinion we may have with them because unlike the Prophets they are not protected against error nor are they worthy of unstinted loyalty. To revert back to the miracles of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), numerous instance of them are recorded in the Tradition and in the various historical and biographical studise of him. These miracles are so well known that it would be futile to narrate them here. Besides, they are now things of the past and cannot be brought back to the world's view once again. We will refer in these pages only to that living miracle of his the Holy Quran which is still in our midst, breathing out the same supernatural splendour and attesting to his Prophetic inspiration with as such power and eloquence as it did at the time of its revelation some 1300 years ago.

The Quran is a miracle in more ways than one. At the moment, however, we will take up only such aspects of it as are capable of common appreciation and of driving home even today the fact of the Prophet's Divine inspiration. Take, first, the Permanance of the Quran. It will be seen that the contents of it are mostly of a kind with which the Arabs were completely unacquainted when they were revealed. Further, its language, in spite of being Arabic, is vastly different from the colloquial as well as the formal and elevated language of Arabic poetry and literature. In the opinion of the linguists, even the language of the Tradition (i.e. the language of the Prophet (Peace be upon him)). Differs a great deal from that of the Quran. It was, therefore not easy for the Arabs to commit the Quran to a complete book but was revealed in fragments on the heart of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). The standard of literacy in Arabia of those days being what it was, it could not be possible for the verses to be written down by a number of persons immediately as they were revealed so that several copies of the Holy book would have grown up sumultaneously, verse by verse, with the revelations.

The Prophet himself being unlettered, could not jot down a single line of the Quran with his own hand, or read what others had written of it. The Quran, moreover, is not a just a matter of a few pages, but makes quite a big volume. A book of this nature and background should, in the normal course, have got lost or, at least, mutilated, in the long corridor of time, as has been the lot of the Holy scriptures of all other religious. If it is presentto this day in its original form, intact and unsullied, it is, as any impartial person can conclude for himself, a supernormal event. Does it not speak vividly of its Divine origin that in spite of the revolution of thirteen centuries the same Quran, without the difference of a solitary word, is preserved by Muslims throughout the world, be they in the East or the West, in Arabia or Iran, in Asia or Europe or Africa or America? Another miraculous feature of the Quran is the profundity of thought it displays. the Quran was presented to the world as God's ward by a man who had not seen the inside of a school, education being unknown in the country where he was born. Till the fortieth year of his life he had remained what his natural disposition and the rugged desert surroundings had made him to be untutored and unlettered, yet lofty of character, kind, honest and gentle.

Then, all of a sudden, a tremendous change had come over him. He was transformed.

He declared for everyone to hear that the mantle of Apostleship had fallen upon him, that hw was God-inspired a prophet and began to recite verses of breath-taking beauty which, he said, were not of his composition but divine. These verses are collected in the Quran, and about them we can challenge the world that they constitute the last word on the nature, being and attributes of the Almighty. The Quranic method of expending highly intricate truths like Futurity and last judgement offers a unique example of instruction and reasoning. The ethical teachings of the Quran are in a class by themselves. They are far superior to the precepts and sermons of any moral teacher. No better law was ever designed for mankind them what is laid down in it. The awareness of human nature of its strength and its weaknesses the Quranic law reveals is truly astounding. It has no parallel anywhere. Furthermore, if the finest brains of the world got togather to evolve a system of Divine worship for humanity, they could not surpass the prayer-structure contained in the Quran. The Namaz alone is a marvel of ingenuity.

The more we ponder over its regulation and arrangement and over its prayer content, the more we are conviced that it could not be the invention of an unlettered son of the desert. No dweller of primitive Arabia, much less, one who had never opened a book or enjoyed the stimulating company of the wise and the learned, could definitely produce by his own exertions the principles for the beneficent regulation of the manifold aspects of human conduct and relations set forth in the Quran. Judged from this angle, Quran, again is a masterpiece of a miracle. It is a greater miracle than the raising of the dead or the healing of the blind. This miracle of the voice and the pen has been conferred upon us because ours is the age of enlightement. people's minds in the olden times were overridden with the mythological lore, with magic and superstition. The modern world is a world of realism and the progress of the arts and the sciences. Learning and wisdom now command much greater importance than passing phenomenon. For elegance of style and the richness of expression, once more, the Quran is without a parallel in the world of literature.

We have not yet seen, nor will ever see, the like of it anywhere. This is not the empty boast of a zealous admirer but a fact. The Arabic literature is not without its gems. Choicest pieces of literary writings, both classical and modern, including plays, poems, stories, speeches and treatises on various subjects are available in the Arabic language. And, than, there are the excellent Traditions of the Holy Prophet and the saying and sermons of his companions. Take any of them and select the finest passage from it; compare it with the briefest Surah of the Quran, and you will know. Nothing will be found approaching the Quran for literary merit. You may have heard the name of the Egyptian scholar, Allama Tantavi jawhari. He has recently written a commentary of the Quran called Jawahir-ul-Quran, which shows how thoroughly grounded he is in the modern Western Philosophy and sceince. In Physics, specially, his knowledge seems to be very great. He relates that during one of his visits to Germany he was sitting in the company of some Orientals friends interested in Arabic studies when one of them asked him if he, too, with he general body of Muslims, believed that the Quran was a miracle from the literary point of view also. He replied that he was taken back and the answer,

the German orientals remarked that they did not expect a man of his culture and education to hold on unscientific, commonplace view like that. Allama Jawhari, thereupon, protested that there was nothing in it to be amazed at; it was a matter of literature, not faith, and could be put to test right then.

He invited them to express in eloquent sentences such as, "Verily, the Hell is boundless, " and, "The Hell is vast beyond measure" . The Allama told them to try again and take as much time over it as they wanted, but they confessed that they had done their best and could do no better. He then recited, the following verse from the Quran : One day we will ask Hell, " Are thee filled to the full?" It will say, "are there any more to come?" (Quran : Kaf, 3)The German scholars jumped from their seats with excitement on hearing the verse and admitted with utmost frankness their inability to match the majestic eloquence of the Quran.

Both in its literary form and content, the Quran is an much a miracle today as it was when it first made its appearance through the medium of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). We can confidently hold it out to the world and say that since the ministry of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) is to stay valid and unchanged till the end of time, it is the will of God that this miracle of his be also endowed with enternity. It is a luminous, unfading sign of God for all time and for all mankind. Those who may be open to doubt and uncertainty can again faith books, religious as well as otherwise. They will see the truth with own eyes, and should they remain indifferent to it, their hearts are sealed to God and nothing but the punishment of Hell awaits them as their ultimate lot. Another historical miracle of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) is the mighty revolution in thought and spirit he ushered in. The story of this revolution has been treasured up in the annals of the world for the succeeding generations to know and get inspiration from.

How utterly depraved was the social, moral and spiritual condition of Arabic at the time of the Advent of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) is known to friend and foe alike. The whole land was steeped in religious stupor, in crime, folly and sin. The Life to come and retribution for good and evil were, as motives of action, practically unknown. Drink, adultery and gambling were common. Internecine wars, murders, robberies and other deeds of lawlessness and bestiality were the pride of the people. Came the Prophet, and, lo, the entire scene was transformed. What a wonderful change, really, the word he preached had brought about! Idolators became monotheists, purely and truly the worshippers of One God. They now lived under a constant sense to sunk in a most revolting state of semi barbarism were recast to function as torch-bearers of civilization in the world; virtu replaced vice; crime and cruelty became extinct, and justice and clemency sprang up in their stead. An authentic record of this stupendous change is available in the books of history, and even the most inveterate enemy of Islam cannot deny that it had been wrought in the lives of the Arabs wholly through the teachings of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his missionary endeavour. I make bold to say that this unique success, which, surely, is a miracle if ever there was one, and defy the critics to produce anything measuring upto it in a hundred years, the many and various resources of mind, matter and spirit the modern times have placed at their command notwithstanding.

I am reminded here of an interesting incident. I had an uncle, now dead, who was a Unani physician by profession and possessed an exceptional keenness of intellect and a ready wit. He was a natural debater and had a through knowledge of theology. He told me that during a railway journey he had to change the train at lucknow and this necessitated a halt at the station for about three hours. Since he did not like the idea of passing the time in idleness, he thought of a plan to put it to some use. He hired a tanga and went to see Mr.Niaz Fatehpuri at the office of the Nigar. On reaching there, he desired an hour's interview with him to discuss what he said was an important matter. At first, Mr. Niaz was not willing to concede his request, discouraged, perhaps, by the appearance of my uncle. But the letter's persistence and the cleverness of his argument finally prevailed and the editor sat attentively to listen. "I often have the pleasure of reading the Nigar", my uncle began. "Your intelligence, your learning and the force of your pen have made a deep impression on me, and I have come today to beg you to employ your extraordinary abilities for a much higher and nobler purpose. you see how widespread is evil in the world; how people are getting immersed, day be day, in vice and immorality. Take your own city of Lucknow. What a dismal picture does it present from the human and the moral points of views? Its citizens are grossly illiterate, uncultured and narrow of outlook. The sanitary conditions are horrible. There is dirt and disease every where. In every walk of life, one finds deceit and selfishness. All the finer qualities of human character are missing in the people while everything that is petty and mean has become the order of the day with them. Good manners, courtesy, honesty, truthfulness and justice are extinct. In such circumstances, it becomes the duty of the intelligentsia to devote itself wholeheartedly to the reconstruction of society. If people like you could raise to the occasion and launch a concerted programme of social and moral uplift with the same drive and enthusiasm with which national undertakings are carried through, the face of the world would be changed. Make a beginning from Lucknow.

I am willing to place my entire services at your disposal in this noble endeavour. Believe me, within a year or two we will build up a new Lucknow which will be an example to the world; and then, we will go ahead and build a new world. I am confident that all good, right-thinking persons will join hands with us in this worthy task". "Molvi Saheb", Mr.replied with evident astonishment, "you seem to be a very simple-minded person. You don't know what you are talking about. Even if there were hundreds of persons like you and me they could not accomplish this work". "But, why?" my uncle asked. "You are such an excellent writer and have a press of your own. I suppose you are also a very good speaker. I, too, am a writer and speaker of some merit. Further, I am sure that as soon as we begin our compaign, all the newspapers and periodicals will lend us their support and an army of writers and speakers will be at our beck and call. You will see that in a few days the whole atmosphere will be electrified and a new springtime will come over the earth. If not the world, we can, at least, reform our province and our city. Don't lose heart; have a little faith, and you will see the truth of what I say". "You really are a very simple man", Mr.Niaz said again. "You have no knowledge of the world. It is beyond your power and mine to change it." "Well", my uncle rejoined, "Let me ask you a question. From your writings I feel that you have a good grasp of history. You will be

aware that about 1350 years ago this very thing was brought about in Arabia, in a land which was utterly devoid of educ- ation and enlightement and whose people were far ahead in wickedness and immorality than all the rogues and rascals of the present-day world. It was brought about by a man who could neither read nor write; there was no press at his disposal, no journal to carry his message to the four corners of the land, and no team of poets and orators to beat his drum.

If in those dismal circumstences, and with such poor equipment, an illiterate man could alter the destiny of his nation,why can educated persons like us not do it, particularly, when we also command the power of the pen and press and thousands of others of our fashion are there in the world to come to our aid, not to speak of the various governments which will, naturally, grudge us no encouragement in this laudable mission? There is really nothing to be dismayed of. I even say that if it took twenty years to produce the change in Arabia, we will be able to do it in one year. What is needed is single-minded devotion and resoluteness of will." " Molvi Sahib", said Mr.Niaz, "It is hard to explain, but it is impossible. You are grossly mistaken about ourselves and the world. It is pure wishful thinking." "Alright", my uncle said, "Tell me, whether it is a fact or not that such a thing was achieved in Arabia some 1300 years ago? "It is a fact, of course. Who can deny it?" replied Mr.Niaz.This is all that I wanted to hear from you", my uncle concluded. "Some time ago I had read your article on the denial of miracles.

I called on you today only to explain what a miracle really was and to show that in your heart you too believed in it. A miracle is a thing occurring through the agency of a Divine Prophet which other men are powerless to enact, and you have said repeatedly that, in spite of the numerous advantages you possess, you are unable to produce even in lucknow what the unlettered Apostle of God had so marvelously accomplished in the country of Arabia".
As the discussion came to a close, the time at my uncle's disposal also drew to an end, so, he came away although Mr. Niaz Fatehpuri was pressing him to stay a little more, presumably to make amends for discourtesy he had shown earlier. The social, theological and spiritual brought about by the Prophet in his own lifetime in Arabia is, thus, an undying miracle of his in the same manner as the Quran. It is a different thing that the prevalent degeneration among the muslims has cast a thick blanket over it and made it difficult for the world to appreciate its true worth and significance. The Prayers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), i.e., the words he spoke while making devout supplications to God are yet another wonder of the literary world. By the grace of the Almighty, the texts of these prayers are still preserved unimpaired for anyone to derive from them belief in his Apostolic inspiration. For my part, I generally turn to them when I feel the need of reinvigorating my faith. May God reward the "Traditionalists' most bountifully and fill their graves with luster that togather with the other sayings and doings of the Prophet, they also preserved his prayers in their records and, thus, made them safe for posterity. Some scholars.

Later on, assembled them togather to form a separate volume, till now exist scores of books, large as well as small in which the prayers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) have been arranged in different styles. Leaving aside those who are totally dead to

spiritual feeling, no one who reads them can fail to see that they could arise only from an illumined heart a heart that had attained the highest degree of spirituality and was endued with the most intimate understanding of humanity and the universe. A heart that was absolutely free from all that was dark and impure. praise be to Allah that I, at least, receive the light of faith from every prayer of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), and I make no secret of it that perhaps because of my natural bent, my inner self draws a greater measure of faith and confidence in his Apostleship from his prayers than from anything else. The Prayers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) certainly, are a miracle, an ever-glorious, evergreen wonder. In truth, the entire existence of the Prophet, his every word, his every gesture was a miracle. I am afraid, the discussion' on miracles has become a bit too long. But some features of it would have, I suppose, lent nourishment to our faith and would continue to do so in future. Besides, when required, we can place them before those who are not fortunate enough to be blessed with faith in the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and invite them to rethink the process of their spiritual convictions.

One word more and we have done with the them of Prophecy and Apostleship. To accept a person as a Prophet is not the same thing as to him as a leader, a poet or a physician because when we accept someone as a national leader or a poet or a physician it does not mean that we bow before whatever he says in that capacity as gospel truth, while the acceptance of a person as a Prophet implies the clear admission of the fact that the transcendental truths he reveals to us and the guidance he furnishes, are all from God that his words are, in fact, God's words, are, therefore, emphatically true and there can be no doubting or disputing of them. It, thus, becomes our duty not to accept anyone as a Prophet casually, but with utmost deliberation and care, and, then, to follow him with all over mind, body and soul for reason demands that once a person is believed in as a Divine Apostle, whole-hearted allegiance should be rendered to him as such, and whatever he communicates should be listened to and carried out as the command of God. Reconsider it logically. When a person is accepted as a Prophet of God, it is also accepted at that very instant that he is not a liar and an imposter or that he does not suffer form a mental derangment or a phychic disorder, but that God communicates with him and what he tells about the abstract realities that are beyond the scope of our own experience or understanding is based upon Divine communication.

Having done that, would it not be absolutely senseless to be skeptical about or reject something revealed by him on the ground that it did not stand the test of reason? In the modern days, a number of educated persons who take pride in flaunting themselves as rationalists betray a similar perversion of thinking when they open their mouths on religion. To my mind, it is shccr blasphemy and is more illogical than than the downright rejection of the Prophet himself. To study and exmine the tenets of religion for one's further satisfaction and with a view to discovering the wisdom behind them after one has avowed faith in the Prophet as Divine Messenger and acknowledged that his teachings are perfectly true and God-inspired is a separate matter and no harm attaches to it. We do not have the slightest doubt that what the Prophets have taught and what has reached us from Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) through authentic sources is completely in conformity with human nature and intelligence and contains

nothing that may fall short of the ideals of knowledge and wisdom. But how many of us do possess an ideal intellect or wisdom? With our intellects the case, on the other hand, is that if we had been told before the invention of the microscope that a drop of water contained thousands of living bodies, we would have mocked at it. In the same way, had some one said, a century or two ago, that a particular mode of transport, with a hundred passengers on board, could fly in the air at the rate of 500 miles an hour he would have propmtly been shouted down as a liar. But now, both of these things have come to pass before our eyes in the shape of a reality.

To make these poor intellects, unable as they are to comprehend a thing that is going to come true in this very world within a short span of time, the basis of determining the truth of Apostolic revelations is patently absurd. It is advisable, therefore, to exercise extreme care and caution before accepting any one as a Prophet, but once this has been done, he should be followed unquestioningly and every command of his must be regarded as worthy of implicit obedience. This is what wisdom demands and the Prophets have taught. A person who believes in some of the teachings of a Divine Apostle and rejects the others cannot consider himself to be a believer. The Quran has made submission to the dictates of the Prophet in their entirety the sine qua non of faith. " But no, by thy Lord, they have no (real) faith until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls, no resistance against thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction." (Quran : Nisaa', 9)" It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by God and his Apostle, to have an option about their decision." (Quran : Ahzab, 5)

One ofted heared the cry these days that the Traditions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) do not have an essential bearing on faith; it is not necessary to believe in or act according to them; The Quran is enough; it is the whole faith. This erroneous notion is due mainly to an inadequate appreciation of the position and the mission of the Prophets. People who are the victims of it imagine that a Prophet is something of a postman whose job is just to deliver the mail. They suppose that the role of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in religion was only this much that the Quran was revealed to him and he passed it on to others. The Prophet also acts as a deputy of God in unfolding and interpreting the precepts of religion. Just to mankind, it was also a part of his duty to explain the conception of the life of faith contained therein all its details and through his own personal example by translating it into action in his daily existence. For instance, Namaz is prescribed as an obligatory item of worship at a hundred places in the Quran,but nowhere does it say how it is to be offered. Similarly, what is allowed in the matter of food and drink and what is not, is stated very briefly in the Quran. It does not tell us whether we can eat, for instance, canine flesh and the worms or not. There is only this summary statement :

He allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them what is bad (and impure) (Quran : A'iraf, 19)In these and many other spheres the Holy Prophet was called upon to function as God's vicegerent and the interpreter of his will. The regulations and maxims he farmulated with respect to them were Divinely-inspired, springing forth, as they did, from the knowledge that had been vouchsafed to him by

God. These regulations and maxims go to lay down the blue-prints of the Islamic way of life.

In the Quran itself where one of the duties of the Prophet has been defined as 'To rehearse to them (men) His signs two other phrases He instructs them in Scripture and wisdom and (He) sanctifies them occur immediately after it, meaning that, apart form rehearsing the Quran to the people, the Prophet, will also teach it to them and instruct them in wisdom and that he will cleanse and purify them. At another place, the Prophet is spoken to in these words, "That thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent to them. " It is thus a part of the Prophet's mission also to interpret the book revealed through him to mankind and to elucidate fully the Divine will and purpose contained in it. People who assert that the mission of the Prophet lay wholly in the transmission of the Quran to the world, which is the be-all and end-all of religion, and that it is not necessary, after it, to follow the Traditions or the Sunnah reject, in fact the word of God contained in the verses: " He instructs them in scripture and wisdom and sanctifies to them, " and, " That thou mayest explain clearly to men what is sent to them." The Tradition and the Sunnah of the Prophet are but an exposition of these verses.

They make available to us a complete picture of his Prophetic endeavor of teaching the book and wisdom and of cleansing and explaining clearly to men what is sent to them, and, because of them we can prophet by his mission almost to the same degree as the Holy Companions did as a result of their personal contact with him. Apart from this, were transmission of the Quran the sole object of the setting up of the institution of Apostleship, a much better course would have been to cause it to land from the Heavens on to the roof of the house of Ka'ba in the form of a finished book or to the make the walls of that sacred building read it out to the Meccans as had happened in the case of Moses who had heard the word of God spoken by a bush. A thing like that would have proved more effective with the pagans of Macca and employment of a human agency. If a Man-Apostle was preferred, it was because he alone could properly interpret the Divine Will, by word and by deed, and operate as a fit pattern for humanity. In any event, as we have mentioned earlier, the deniers of the Traditions and the Sunnah, who deceive the Millat in the name of the Quran, have no clear idea of the meaning and significance of prophecy, although they lay claim to being the followers of the sacred Prophet, and their supporters are generally drawn from sections who wish to remain Muslms without having to observe the restrictions imposed by the Shariat.

Once the Principle that the Traditions are not relevant to faith is accepted, there is no form of sensuality or self-indulgence for which justification cannot be found within the framework of religion because details of the life of belief, piety and social uprightness indicated in the Quran can only be known through the practical teachings sayings and the doings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). This mischief is most detrimental to Islam and can prove deadly in its consequences. Some educated and religiously-inclined Hindus are found to believe in the unity of religions which they preach also to other. Their contention is that for salvation it is not necessary to follow a particular religion, but all religions being equally true, one can attain the desired goal by pursuing the path laid down by any of them. Pandit Sunder Lal of Allahabad is a front rank leader of this

school of thought and I know him personally. What is hidden in the hearts is known only to God, but, as far as I can say, he is a sincere and good-hearted man. Having made the propagation of the oneness of faith the chief work in his life, he concentrates on the Muslims. Side by side with being a devout Hindu, he thinks that also believes in Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) as a Divine Apostle and in Quran as a Divine scripture. His favorite them with the Muslims is that what they call the Shariat and that is what basically distinguishes them from other religious communities is found no-where in the Quran, so much so that even the Namaz they offer is not a Quranic Namaz, but a non-Quranic one, for the Quran speaks only Sal,at, and anyone who worships the creator in the temple or medicates upon him anywhere else carries out the Quranic injunction no less faithfully.

What an irony of the times it sadly is that the Quran which was brought by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself is now being employed to wean away the Muslims from the Namaz and the Shariat preached by and revealed through him. The fundamental error of the Muslims who reject the Traditions and the Hindus who espouse the unity of faiths is the same. They fail to appreciate the nature, meaning and scope of the Divine institution of Apostleship. Their activities can succeed only in leading the Muslim masses away from the detailed design the Prophet has formulated as from God, (and which is contained in the Sunnah and the Traditions), for the conversion of the basic foundational principles of the Quran into practice. The above issues did not fall within the range of our discussion. They crept in while we were trying to show that the acceptance of someone as a prophet automatically implied, both logically and religiously, that the should be obeyed in all the aspects of his teachings without reserve or argument; but, it is well that they did, for they do have a topical value.

We will now go back to our main them. The three subjects we have so far dealt with, Monotheism, Futurity and Apostleship are known as fundamental articles of faith. There are some other planks of belief which it is also necessary to affirm before one can be called a Muslim, but the importance of these three lies in the fact that the entire structure of the Prophet's message is based upon them, and without them it would be futile to hope to live according to the plan contained in that message. They form the doctrinal and conceptual foundations of the Islamic scheme of things. The items of faith are divided into two classes, or, rather, into two degrees. Firstly, there are items whose proof from the Prophet is so positive and absolute that there can be no difference of opinion as to their authenticity, and which have been universally accepted as such without any debate or controversy. And, secondly, the times about whichalthough there is sufficient evidence to establish their genuineness as from the Prophet, it is not so clear and emphatic as to rule out the possibility of doubt or argument. The doctrines of Monotheism, Prophecy and the Last day belong to the first group of beliefs.

Besides these, this group includes belief in Quran as the Word of the Almighty, belief in heaven and hell and in the hereafter, in angles, and the raising up of many a Divine Apostle before the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), with the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) being the last of them and the line of these venerable messengers of God terminating with him. All these items make the essentials of faith and have been held as

such unceasingly by the Millat. To try to controvert them would be an act of apostasy. The beliefs that are allotted to the latter group comprise of things like Divine chastisement in the grave, and some other details appertaining to the last day and Resurrection, e.g., Mizan (the Scales), Sir'at (the Bridge), Shafaa't (Intercession) and Royat (the seeing of God). The appearance of Dajjal and the descent in person of Christ as indications of the approach of the last day also belong to the same category. While there is enough proof to associate them with the Prophet, it is not of a standerd to raise them to the level of 'essentials'. To deny them, therefore, by putting far-fetched interpretation on them cannot be denounced as blasphemy or apostasy, though it will be a folly of the first order, nevertheless.

There was no difference of opinion among the Holy Companions over the fundaments of belief, but the different peoples and communities that came into the fold of Islam during their time brought with them their ancient nations and habits of thought which it was not possible to eradicate radically from their minds. The divergence of view which later led to the creation of a number of sects within the Ummat had its origin in this very fact. Disagreement over details or matters of subsidiary importance is not such a serious thing as to result in groupism or factionalism. It is a natural phenomenon, bound to occur in the normal course of things. Factions and groups arise from clashes on basic issues, on points of vital importance to belief and practice, and the Companions, as we have stated earlier, were completely immune from them. The acted as a body, being guided by the same principles and displaying and identical attitude of the mind in situations of a religious import. The numerous sects that came to operate later on can broadly be classified into Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-jama'at (Peple of the Sunnah and the way of the Companions functioning as body) and Ghair Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-jama'at (the rest). The chief distinguishing feature of Ahl-e-Sunnat is that togather with regarding the Quranas the essential groundwork of religion, they hold the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to be a commentary on and a detailed exposition of the basic commands and principles contained therein. In their view, the things that are not mentioned in the Quran but are expressed definitely in the Sunnah are also worthy of our obedience as a part of faith. Further, they believe that the inferences the Holy Companions drew from the Quran and the Sunnah and the points of law on which they unanimously concurred are universally binding and it is not up to a Muslim to challenge collective judgement.

The agreement of the Companions with a religious principle means that it is final and absolute, and to hold it in disputation is a highly perfidious undertaking for the Companions were in a position to know better than anyone else the circumstances and the form and language in which it was revealed and they had further the opportunity to learn the religion directly from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and to profit by his constant advice and guidance. No one, therefore, can be a better authority on faith or claim to understand the spirit and purpose underlying the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) more correctly than them. Religion is what they thought it was. This, in brief, is the basic ideology of Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-jama'at. They are so called for the simple reason that they attach such great importance to the Sunnah and the unanimous authority of the Companions in religion, and hold themselves duty bound to follow them. The other sects do not do so. The first so appear among them were the

Khawarij and the Shias. The Shias, themselves, are divided into a number of groups but this much is common to all of them that they do not regard the Companions (Peace be upon him) to be a valid authority on religion some of them even go to the extent of denouncing the majority of Companions as the enemies and wreckers of faith and in the place of the Sunnah they prefer to go by the Tradition of their Imam. In fact, their whole faith is based on these traditions. According to some sections of the Shias, the Quran, too, is not above suspicion, and, thus, the only reliable source of religion that is left are the pronouncements and the behaviour of the Imams they follow.

The Khawarij acknowledge the Quran as the positive and absolutely unpolluted fountainhead of religion and also give an almost equal weight to the Sunnah with Ahl-e-Sunnat, but, unlike them, they do not believe in the unanimous authority of the Companions as deserving of our unstinted following. In other words, they think that it is quite possibile for the companions as a whole or a large majority of them to have erred in their interpretation of a point of religion or in the assessment and evaluation of a teaching of the Quran or the Sunnah, while the latter-day Muslims may get to its correct meaning a position which is quite unacceptable to Ahl-e-Sunnat. Among the other sects to crop up in Islam during the early days were the Motazila, the Jamias, the Murjeah, the Kadriyah and the Jabriyah. As far as I have been able to guess, the chief point of difference between them and Ahl-e-Sunnat, again, is the collective judgement of the Companions as an authoritative source of legislation after the Quran and the Sunnat. The Sunnis.

The Sunnis stand fast by the letter and the spirit of the law emanating from all the three sources without endeavouring to make it suit their convenience, whereas the other sects rely to such an extent on their own judgement that they find loopholes even in the fundamental principles of the Shariat and have no hasitation in going against the general practice of the Companions. The thing that differentiates basically the Sunnis from the other branches of the Ummat is that they adhere strictly to the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the way of the Companions and do not project their own thinking into them no matter what the others say or do. all the other differences between them are the off-shoots of this primary line of cleavage. We will take up some of these differences to illustrate our point. A well-known maxim among the Khawarij says that a Muslim forfeits his faith on committing a grievous sin and in the Hereafter he will meet the same fate as an infidel.

They base their conclusion on certain pronouncements in the book and the Sunnah in which infidelity is ascribed to some major acts of moral transgression, or phrases like, " There is no faith in him", "He does not belong to us", "He has no place in Islam" have been used to censure the conduct of the person who is guilty of them, or in which the punishment of the hell is clearly promised to him. In contrast to them is the Murjeah sect which holds that the mere affirmation of faith is enough to ensure salvation in Futurity. A person may, after he has brought faith in Islam, commit any number of sins in his life, and yet he will not go to Hell; only his place in the Hereafter will be some what inferior to that of a more virtuous Muslim. The Murjeah take their stand on the dictum which gives the glad tidings of the Heaven to everyone who possesses the bare qualification of

faith and argue themsalves comfortably out of the provision that run counter to it in the same way as the Khawarij brush aside all tenets of faith which, in opposition to their preconceived notions deliverance, show that a Muslim does not become an infidel by being guilty of one of the major sins.

The truth, however, is that the founders of both the sects had their own individual ideas and spiritual inclinations which clouded their vision. For reason of History the originators and early preachers of the Kharji sect were prone to think that the graver sins were fatal to faith, the commission of which turned a Muslim into a heathen, and those of the Murjeah sect that to sin even in the extreme was not a matter of much importance. In consequence, they caught hold of the tenets that appealed to them and made them the guides to their action and those that went again their wishes they just rejected on one ground or another or interpreted them in such a way as to bring them round to their pet convictions. The people of the Sunnah, on the other hand, took not of the viewpoint of the Companions on the subject and adopted for themselves the path they had pursued in respect of it, which was that the perpetration of the major sins was neither the equivalent of apostasy, as the Khawarij supposed, nor a trivial, insignificant affair as the Murjeah thought, but deserving of Divine reprobation and chastisement, and yet not unpardonable if He so desired. The seeing of God in the Hereafter is another matter. I would wish to mention in this connection as an example. It is stated candidly in the Traditions that one of the boundless blessings the faithful will be rewarded within the world to come will be that they will see the most high and this will be the source of greatest happiness to them.

The Quran, too, at a place says: "Some faces that day will beam (in brightness and beauty) looking towards their Lord." (Quran : Qiyamat, 1)The Quranic verse clearly tells that on the last day the faces of the loyal servants of God will be radiant with joy for then they will be favoured by him with the matchless spectacle of his own Adored self. But the Motazila who have a habit of taxing poor human intellect beyond its legitimate limits and want to believe in a religious truth only after it has stood the test of reason repudiated the possibility of it on the ground that it was not admissible logically. They argued that only a thing that existed in material form or had colour or surface could be seen by the human eye and that, too, when it was placed in front of the viewer and within a certain distance of him. Since God had neither form nor substance nor was he contained in space and time He was here, there and everywhere, now and always the question of seeing him did not arise. Having thus rejected the possibility of seeing God on rationalistic grounds, it was not difficult for them to find their way to refute the relevant texts and in this they had the support of the Shias who also hold an identical view.

In contrast to them the people of the Sunnah saw that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had made an authoritative revelation about it in the Traditions and the Companions had drawn no other inference from it except that in the hereafter the faithful creatures of God will be blessed with an unconcealed view of him and they accepted it as true, giving no weight to the dialectical exertions of the rationalists like the Motazila. But, let no one conclude in a hurry that the creed of Ahl-e-Sunnat is not in consonance with reason.

There is no dogma in it, no single doctrine or principle that may be repugnant to the intellect. The dialecticians of this school have convincingly established the truth and logicality of each and every precept or item of belief included in it. On the issue of the seeing of God in the Hereafter itself, all the objections raised by the critics the Shiasand the Motazila have been thoroughly rebutted by Ahl-e-Sunnah.

The details of the Sunni standpoint are available in Maulana Abdul Aziz's well-known treatise on the refutation of the Shia sect, Tohfa-e-Isna Ashariya, and in Maulana Abdul Haq Huqqani's Aqaed-ul-Islam. Here, I will say just a few words with a view to allay any anxiety you may be having in this regard. The whole case of the Motazila is built on the assumption that it is not possible to see a thing unless the conditions and circumstances needed for it in this world of ours are persent. The assumption itself is wrong. Even the Motazila do not deny that God sees everything, material as well as non-material, and Since he is boundless in his existence, it cannot be said about any of his creations that it is in front of him or in line with his vision;_and, yet, He sees them all. Thus, the law of vision which the Motazila regard as absolute is, in this existence is limited in many ways, and, to reject, on the strength of it, the possibility of seeing God in the Hereafter is patently incorrect.

The powers and faculties that will be conferred on those who will in the heaven will be a million items stronger and more advanced then what we have here, and the sight that will be granted to them will also be such as to enable them to see God. If here in this worl we can now observe, with the aid of mechanical devices like the telescope and microscope, things the earlier generations could never dream of, what is unbelievable there in the blessed ones in the Hereafter being endowed with preternatural vision? The so-called logical premise on the basis of which the Motazila had rejected the Prophetic revelation, flimsy as it always, has been thoroughly exploded by the modern sceintific inventions today hundreds of articles are being sold from shop to shop in the market of which it would have seemed utterly incredible if someone was to have spoken a few centuries ago. I often say that to refuse to accept a religious truth now in the modern times on the ground that it does not make sense is to proclaim one's colossal lack of imagination. Syas God in the Quran: "soon we shall show them our signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth) and in their own souls (until) it becomes manifest to them that this the truth."
(Quran : Ha'_Mim, 6)The achievements of science in the modern age have made it possible for us to understand many a transcendental truth which people in the past used to find so hard believe on account of their ignorance.

On the question of predestination and free will, similarly, the Jabriyah, and the Kadriyah sects took the course that agreed with their traditional attitudes of thinking and become the champions of the one or the other of the two concepts. They made the provisions that fell in with their pet notions the basis of their respective convictions and ignored or misinterpreted those that turned out to be otherwise. But, the Sunnis, in their customary way, allowed their judgement to be determined wholly by the apparent law and the general practice of the Companions. The Companions believed that everything that came to pass in the world including man's own actions and deeds appertaining to him were

constrained and designed by the Divine will. While acknowledging the freedom of human will, unlike the jabriyah who are downright fatalists and give no more option to man then to a plant or mineral, they did not regard it to be entirely undefined by fate as the Qadriyah do. The Ahl-e-Sunnat readily adopted this view as the most correct one on the subject and drew the same infrence from the relevant revelations and pronou ncements as the Companions had done.

The mental attitude of Ahl-e-Sunnat in these spheres has been very ably summed up by Hazrat Omer bin Abdul Aziz in a letter he wrote in reply to a correspondent who had asked for his views on predestination. This letter has been reproduced by the traditionalists from authoritative sources. After enjoining strictly a life of piety and obedience to God and the Prophet (Peace be upon him), and laying full stress on the observance of the Sunnah, the letter read: " You should adhere faithfully to any of belief the Holy Companions may have held or performed for themselves as a whole, and make in your own because they were intimately acquainted with the knowledge God vouchsafed to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and were possessed of deep insight into religion. They could get to the bottom of every problem and were in a position to comprehend the religious truths better than us. In the knowledge and understanding of religion they were for ahead of the others. Should you still feel that you are in the right (on a point on which you take a different view from them) it would mean that you claim for yourself superiority over the entire body of the Companions in the matter of religion. How manifestly foolish and dangerous a notion would it be for anyone to entertain?The letter then proceed to deal with the issue at hand in a few lines, the gist of which is that the concept of fate had been expounded in various Traditions by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and it was from him that the Companions believed in and taught to others in their respect during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and afterwards and what, in their option, was also confirmed by the Holy book was that all that happened in the world including all that we did was in the knowledge of God from Eternity; it was pre-ordained by him and inscribed in the preserved Tablet. The letter concludes with these words:

"If there are any verses in the Quran which seem to you to contradict the doctrine of fate, remember that the Holy Companions also had read them and that because of the guidance and education they had received from the prophet (peace be upon him) and the illuminating company of his which it was their constant privilege to enjoy, they were better qualified to understand the meaning and purpose of the Quran than you. When, with all that, they still believed in fate, you can very will realize that you are at fault in the interpretation of those verses."The characteristic thing about the approach of Ahl-e-Sunnat, in short, is as it has been under-lined by Omer bin Abdul Aziz in his letter that they repose full faith in the Companions functioning as a whole and follow implicitly the path marked out by them. The Ahl-e-Sunnat start from the admission that in the appreciation and understanding of religion and its principles it is not possible to excel that august body of men. This course is positively the safest to adopt where the religious truths are concerned, and the bulk of the Ummat has always abided by it.
To stress the same point, Hazrat Ali, on another occasion, took recourse to the device of calling for a large-size copy of the Holy Quran, and holding it aloft before a big crowd,

of saying to it, "Speak to them, O Quran." By this means he again demonstrated the truth that the Quran was a book and not an oracle which could speak out its mind. To seek guidance from it one had to go to someone who possessed an authoritative knowledge of it and whose spiritual and moral conduct was also above suspicion.

The above incident will show that mentality of the contemporary groups and individuals who refuse to be governed by Salaf-i-Salikeen and say that they will obey only the Quran and the Sunnah is totally akin to that of the Khawarij, it tells of such persons aim at bringing people round to their point of view by cutting them loose from the guidance of the worthy predecessors, and the sample-minded folks who listen to them do fall a pray to this strategy. This, in course of time, leads to the emergence of new sects and factions within the Ummat. Even in subsidiary matters like the Fiqh, in our opinion, prudence lies in permitting one self to be guided wholly by the interpretations of the Holy law laid down by the popular Imams, and by the general practice of Salf-i-Salikeen, more specially in these days of easy Ijtehad. Some educated and liberal-minded persons are not content to bind themselves to any particular school of jurisprudence. For them also it is advisable not to take a new line on issues over which there is a complete unanimity amoung the four leading Imams, and on subjects on which there is a difference of opinion among them, the safest thing would be to follow the interpretations of anyone of them without attempting to forge a new way for themselves but to the whole of the Ummat as it will lead to confusion in its ranks. Those of us with an ambition of devoting ourselves to the service of Islam should be particularly careful in this behalf. We must strictly avoid doing anything by way of thought or action which may be the cause of disruption in the Ummat or create suspicion in the popular mind about our spiritual integrity. Hazrat Shah Waliullah has stated in Fuyooz-ul-Haramain that during his stay at Madina the Prophet (Peace be upon him) taught him by inspiration three things that were against his natural bent of mind and one of these was conformance to the four schools in matters of Fiqh. The sole purpose of it was that the great work of religious reformation God was to take from him and his disciples and successors demanded that they should not lose the trust of the Muslim masses. In any case, it is most essential for men of a much lesser stature like ourselves to be particular about. What the Ummat needs today are not new theories and original concepts but a revitalization of faith and the breathing into it of a life of belief and virtue. To this laudable task let us apply all our time and all our energy.

Practical Law

As we said in the beginning, the religious teachings the Prophet (Peace be upon him) brought into the world from God fall into two categories, one appertaining to belief and ideology and the other to morality and action. The teachings of the first group we have discussed already, and now we will address ourselves to those of the second. These later ones, to which, exclusively, the term, Shariat, is sometimes applied, are again classified into a number of sections like worship, morality, social conduct, religious endeavor and government and politics.

Just as in the sphere of belief the fundamental articles of faith command the highest preference, in the Shariat worship is of the super most importance bacause it is through

it that the relationship between God and his creatures finds its most candid and intimate expression, and it also plays a vital role in the uplift and reformation of all the other departments of human existence.

Worship, in Islam, denotes acts a person performs solely with the object of paying his humble homage to the Glory and Magnificence of God and acknowledging and affirming his own total helplessness, humility, submissiveness and devotion, and of gaining His pleasure and earning nearness unto Him. In Arabic, these acts are also called Kuruba't (meaning, the means of access). They include Namaz (Prayer), Roza (fasting), Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca), Zaka't-o-Sadaqa't (Poor-tax and other propitiatory offerings) Zikr-o-Tilawat (repearing the names, attributes and praises of God and the recitation of the Quran), Kurbani (animal sacrifice) and all other deeds of devotion carried out exclusively to pay reverent service to the Almighty and for one's own spiritual benefit.

Worship is the medium of contact between the worshipper and the worshipped. It extends straight from the one to the other. It is obvious that our prayers and other devotional performances do no good to God; they add nothing his power or Glory. A Tradition has it that, "If all men and all things, first and last, were to become pious and religious in the extreme it would not advance the Magnificence of God by a mere atom, and if all of them were to become sinners and offenders, it would not detract from his Resplendent Majesty and Greatness even by the slightest degree imaginable."

Our worship, in short, is wholly for our own good and the fulfillment of our spiritual destiny. We have been commanded to it by God so that we may thereby strengthen our awareness of him and make ourselves worthy of his special grace.

It is true that there can be no likeness or comparison between God and man. One is the Mighty Creator and the Supreme Owner of the Heavens and the Earth, the other a hopeless weakling, a creature of a filthy drop of fluid. A worthless, despicable warm can be said to possess greater similarity to the most powerful monarch on the earth than man can ever claim to have with his maker. How, then, is man to obtain access to God and win his favour and love? This can be possible only through making an explicit acknowledgement of God's infinite power and majesty and his own complete humbleness and affirming it through his daily action. This is what brings man closer to God and makes him his beloved, trusted servant.

Man's existence has a two-fold aspect: material or bestial and spiritual or celestial. It is through the later aspect that a link is forged between him and the creator, it being the really valuable part of his personality, the part that marks him out as the most excellent of created beings. Whatever a man does by way of eating and drinking and the

satisfaction of the other desires of flesh and blood is related to the animal part of his existence and contributes directly to its maintenance and growth. This part is a manifestation of the material world in him, and in this he is partnered by all other living beings. The other part, the spiritual one, which represents the projection of the celestial world in his personality, and, thus, distinguishes him from the rest of the living things, receives its sustenence from God-worship. By the agency of worship, he, as such, produces a live contact. A warm, intimate relationship between himself and the Almighty. Without it, he simply gets reduced to the level of an elevated animal, or even worse. Worship lifts up a man to the status of a being within whose earthly body dwells the spirit of the angels, and though he walks on the earth, he walks in harmony with the Celestial World.

Besides worship, the other acts prescribed by religion also cary a recognition and a reward. There is, for instance, a reward on regulating one's social and moral behaviour according to the wishes of God and on striving after the success and Glory of the faith; in some cases, in fact, struggle for the victory of faith enjoys superiority that worship has of engendering that inner affinity with the Celestial World and for bringing about the unfolding and the ultimate flowering of the spiritual and celestial aspect of human personality is not matched any other act.

The reason is that all other acts, though they may be performed according to the wishes of God and with the object of winning His good graces, are related, somehow or other, to created beings. For example, ethics and morality, social behaviour, government and politics, study and instruction, the prohibiting of evil and ordering of good deeds. All these branches of human conduct have for their main basis the regulation and control of the relationship between the individual and the society. They are linked with God only in the sense that he has commanded us to them. But worship is solely of and for the Almighty. When a person engages himself in an act of devotion to him, his face is to claim a fraction of his loyalty or spiritual homage. Herein lies the uniqueness of worship and the great secret of the tremendous importance it exercises in religion.

People whose vision is dominated by materialism fail to appreciate this grand characteristic of worship. They try to discover in it benefits that could be applicable to this material world of ours, men like Inayatullah Mashriqi having touched so low sole purpose is to assist in the spiritual edification of man by enabling his soul to emancipate itself, for a while, from the chains that tie it down to the earth and dwell in the celestial World, that it is a sort of physical exercise or parade for including virtues like punctuality and dicipline among the Muslims. All this arises from ignorance of the essential meaning and purpose of worship.

Once, I and my friend and associate, Maulana Abdul Hasan Ali, were on a visit to a certain place. A few days earlier to that an article by the Maulana, entitled, from home to the house of God,' had appeared in the Haj number of Al-Furqan. It was, in truth, a remarkable article, charged with rare feeling and emotional intensity. I have read it a number of times, and, each time, it has moved me to tears. During our stay, an educated

friend, with a fair amount of study of religious books to his credit, came to us. He praised the article lavishly, but, in the end, he said, "There is, however, one great defect in it. It completely overlooks the real motive behind the Haj congregation". I asked him what that real motive was and he replied, "That Muslims form all over the world may assemble at one place to discuss the pressing problems of the day." On being further asked from where had he learnt that motive, he furnished the following reply: "What else", said he, "can the idea be in requiring the pilgrims to make a camp in the desolate plain of Mina, from the 10th to the 13th of the month except that they may have an opportunity of excha- nging views on the on the current affairs of the world, a way from the distractions of the city?" I then, asked if he had performed the Haj and experienced of himself the scene at Mina? The reply was, "Not yet. But when God bestows the good fortune on me....." "when God bestows the good fortune on you, " I interjected, "You will known how grievously mistaken you are".

strangely, people who ascribe such ends and purposes to Haj do not realize that if it really was intended to be something of a Muslim conferenc on international affairs it would be open only to leaders of Muslim opinion in various countries, or, at least, special stress would have been laid on their presence, while, in fact, it has been made obligatory for every Muslim, man and woman, who has the means to undertake the trip, and the obligation holds for only once in a lifetime. More, the wearing of Ihram, the Tawaf, Sai, sacrificial offering of animals, the dash from Mecca to Mina, from Mina to Arafat, from Arafat to Muzdalifa by night, from Muzdalifa, back to Mina and then again to Mecca, and back once more to Mina to make a halt there and carry out the ritual of Rami jamar what can have these apparently meaningless acts, this carious, eccentric behaviour to do with an International Islamic conference? We do not say that no worldly advantages can or should be derived from the Haj, but that these do not form a part of the aim and purpose of this or any other mode of worship. Those who think along these lines suffer from a primary fault. They have not understood the character and spirit underlying the Islamic concept of worship. worship is essentially not a thing of the external world. It is people who are ideologically incapable of seeing anything beyond the range of earthly desires and interests that ascribe petty results and advantages to it in their eagerness to seek an explanation of it in terms of the material world. Attempts like these succeed only in destroying the intrinsic beauty of worship by bringing it down to the level of an ordinary means to an ordinary end.

The real function of worship, to repeat, is to be the source of the winning of God's pleasure and the securing of nearness unto Him, self-purification and the evoluton of the celestial element in man's personality, and of all human deeds and actions it is one to be wholly and exclusively related to the Divine. No one but the Lord can have a share in it. Worship cannot be offered in any from whatever motive to anyone apart from the Almighty. whoever does so condemn himself to the lot of a polytheist. No other human act possesses this high distinction.

Hence, we find that on no other field of our activity have so many restrictions been placed or rules framed with such thoroughness and detail for its conduct :

After this general discussion we proceed to examine, at some length, the four obligatory modes of worship, Namaz, Roza, Zaka't and Haj. These items are included among the basic planks of Islam and are of exceptional importance of faith is raised.

Among them most outstanding the Namaz. The value of an article depends on the need it serves.The price of a motor car is judged not by its colour or shape but the capacity to fulfil the purpose for which it is meant, nor is a buffalo cheap or dear according to the way it walks it is milk it yields that decides. So is Namaz pre-eminent because it plays the most effective role in the realisation of the objectives associated with worship. This will also explain the numerous conditions that are attached to it, e.g., the cleanliness of body, the cleanliness of cress, the cleanliness of the ground on which it is offered and Wazu.

Further, some forms of worship are representative, in particular, of the sovereignty and the omnipotent power of God. By carrying them out the worshipper pays tribute to these qualities of the Divine, making, and the same time, a confession of his own surrender and servility. Zaka,t is classical instance. And, then there are other forms that are related more specially to the lovable, adorable aspect of Divinity. They serve to symbolize the love and devotion of the adorer for the adored, his earnest yearing from him, that he is his heart, soul and everything. The fasts offer an excellent expression to this side of relationship between man and his Creator by calling upon him to shun food and drink in the style of a dejected lover, and so is the Haj a true symbol of love's frenzy the strange dress, the curious rituals, the walking round the house of Ka'aba with someone's thought delightfully embedded in the heart and the frantic kissing of a slab of stone in a corner of that beloved building, the wandering out into the wilderness and staying there for days and nights all these things are there but to portray the Divine ecstasy, the sweet madness of love, which, in truth, constitutes the real spirit of this unique pilgimage.

But, Namaz is comprehensive of both of these aspects. The dignified, yet respectful, presence before the Almighty, the disciplined falling in lne of the devotees, like lowly slaves, and the carrying out by them of fixed movements in an orderly, systemetic manner demonstrate exquisitely the Over-lordship, the Power, the Sovereignty of God and man's total helplessness, while the state of the heart, the feelings of expectancy, of ardent hope and sublime devotion, that work themselves up within it during the prayer, is typical of the tendar emotion of love for the Divine. The Prophet's (Peace be upon him) words, "In Namaz lies the coolness of my eyes" are richly expressive of the later aspect of the Namaz. Often, when the prayer time came, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) would address his Muezzin, Bilal, in this loving manner : "O Bilal! Bring to comfort to my heart, soothe the agony that is rising within it by giving the call to prayer. "It has been remarked by Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-Sani in one of his letters that, "Namaz is the balmfor the aching hearts. 'Bring me comfort, O Bilal!' conveys this truth and "The coolness of my eyes lies in Namaz' imparts this secret."

It is reported that one day Hazrat Abdul Wahid Lahori, a Khalifa of Hazrat Mujaddid, asked, "Will there be Namaz in the Heaven?" "The Heaven is not the 'house of action '", said someone. "It is the house of recompense'. Why should Namaz be there, then?" On hearing it, the Hazrat observed with great anguish, "How will it then be possible to live in the Heaven?"

The tranquillity and joy which people whose Namaz is a real genuine one drive from it can further be imagined from the following utterance of Hazrat Mujaddid: "What Royat is in the Hereafter, Namaz is here in this world : there is great nearness unto the beloved in the world in Namaz as there is in the Royat in the Hereafter."

The distinctive merit of the Namaz, hence, lies in this that it reflects fully the sovereignty and Overlordship of God as well as his Livability and Elegance.In its from it portrays the complete submission of man to his Master ; in its spirit it is filled altogather with the essence of the joy, the tenderness and the rich melancholy of love. It is Namaz alone which unites in itself so success- fully the two seemingly opposite aspects. and this fact, on its own, should be enough to lift it above the other modes of worship.

Another reason why Namaz is so pre-eminently important is that, in it, faith finds a tangible form and a detailed expression. What I mean is that faith, in its essence,. is an abstract feeling, a state of the heart, it gets crystallized in Namaz and attains, through it, a definite, perceptible existence. Namaz is the concrete manifestation of faith, an outer expression of an inner condition. There are certain things which have an abstract as well as a material existence. The same is with faith. In its abstract existence, it is the Namaz. I suppose that it is for this reason that at some places in the Quran the word Iman (faith) has been used to mean Namz as in this verse about which the general opinion of the commentators is that it signifies Namaz where it says Iman.

"And never would God make your faith of no effect." (Quran : Baqara, 17)

The occasion for its revelation is reported to be that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had been offering Namaz for a long time with his face turned towards the city of Jerusalem when the command came to him to do so instead towards the house of Ka'aba in Mecca. At this, some Muslims feared what would the fate be of the Prayers they had offered up till then. Would they all be lost? The verse was, then, revealed to assure them that their earlier prayers would, in no case, go waste. They had already found acceptance with God. Anyhow, in it Namaz has been referred to as Iman, and, in my view, for the very fact that Namaz is the outer expression of the inner feeling of the faith. Because of the close affinity between faith and prayer (Namaz) again, I believe, persistent disregard of Namaz has been characterised in the Traditions as the equivalent of infidelity, and, on the strength of this, some founder-doctors of Islamic jurisprudence have proceeded to lay down the law that by wilfully neglecting the Namaz a person loses his title to Islam and goes out of its fold. These jurists do not look upon the neglect of other obligatory

duties or the commission of one of the major moral transgressions, but hold that it is equal in its consequences to idolatory or the worship of the crucifix, which are, by their very nature, inimical to Islam. They say that as prostration before an idol or a crucifix is an act amounting to infidelity, even though it may not have been done with that intent, so also the deliberate omission of Namaz. In a word, Namaz is more closely related to faith than any other act of religion. Furthermore, Namaz exerts influence over all the departments of life and transforms the entire existence of a person into one of virtue and godliness. provided, of course, that the Namaz that is offered is real, and not merely nominal, its effectiveness in this direction is of the very extreme. It is said in the Traditions that the conduct of some people will be judged on the last day by the quality of their Namaz has been correct and of the right order, their whole life will be accepted as such, and if not, it will be condemned outright as one of default and transgression. The idea is that Namaz, if it is truly what is should be, is a sufficient proof of the purity and goodness of one's all-round behavior on the earth. I will now offer some suggestions towards improvement in the quality of the Namaz. By the grace of God, we are conscious of the importance of this obligation and discharge ourselves of it regularly. But, unfortunately, most of us are quite content with manner of our doing it and have no ambition for enriching its spiritual content. This is highly lamentable. We have just seen the remark of Hazrat Mujaddid that "What Royat is in the Hereafter, Namaz is in this world. " We can conclude for ourselves from it how kneely desirous should we be to make our Namaz better and better.

There is no limit to the scope for improvement in the inner quality and merit of Namaz. Even the best Namaz can be improved upon a thousand times with sustained effort and perseverance. The first step towards it is to learn thoroughly, if it has not already been done, the regulations relevent to it and make a constant endeavor to say the Namaz in the light of them and with a proper feeling of reverence and humility.

The next is to call within oneself, at the time of prayer, an active awareness of the fact that God is present everywhere and sees everything. It is necessary to strive to one's utmost to the best of one's ability to offer up the Namaz in the manner one would have done had God present right there is his full splendour and Glory, Commanding one to say the Namaz in his presence. This, admittedly, is not an easy task; it is extremely difficult of achievement; but the vital thing is to keep it permanently before the mind's eye as the goal to be striven after with sincerity and determination. The mere effort will make a lot of difference. Its way is to contemplate inwardly, when a person stands up for the Namaz, that God is Omnipresent and all-seeing and though hidden from his view, He is watching him intently nevertheless. The prayer is, thus, being offered in the presence of the Divine. All the acts of the Namaz Kayam, Kauud, Ruku, Sujud, should be carried out in this spirit and under the shadow of this over-riding thought. The realisation of this state, even in the remotest degree, will be a most splendid achievement.

Yet again, some verses from an inevitable part of each Namaz. Their meaning, at least, should be learnt with due care, so that when they are recited the worshipper may know what actually is he saying to God through them, and his inner self may keep pace with the words he is uttering. This will greatly facilitate concentration.

Those who offer Namaz without a proper understanding of its contents do acquit themselves of their duty, but, in a rather poor way, and they will be taken to task for it.

Some modern educated Muslims are prone to take an extreme view in this behalf. They say that the Namaz of men, who because of their ignorance of Arabic, repeat the verses mechanically and do not understand their import and a vast majority of us belongs to this category remains as good. If the purpose of offering up Namaz was only to keep mentally with that one recited in it, the effort of such men would, indeed, be of no avail to them. But the truth is that the Namaz implies many things. It implies, instance, the cutting aloof of oneself from all other interests and occupations as soon as the call is given, the performing of ablution as ordained by the most high and the turning of one's face towards him to the exclusion of everything else, the pres- enting of oneself before him, standing reverentially with arms folded like a meek slave, the touching of the ground with the fore- head as a mark of utter submission and obeisance, and the reciting of what one is bidden by him to recite. Since these aspects of the Namaz find their fulfillment in the case of the common Muslims also who recite the verses without an intelligent appreci- ation of them, it cannot be said that their labours avail them nothing. But, at the same time, it can not be denied that their Namaz lacks and luster which comes only from an understanding of its contents. This, certainly, is a great loss and a colossal misfortune and should not, therefore, be taken lightly. About our worldly goods our desire is that they should be of less solicitous about the worth and quality of our Namaz. If anything, our anxiety in relation to it should be greater by far and we should spare on pains to lift our Namaz to the point of perfection.

Some people are unnecessarily distressed by stray thoughts crowding into the mind at the time of the Namaz and fear that their devotions are ruined because of them. Our endeavor should, of course, be to shut out distracting thoughts from the mind when at prayer, if they still creep in, the quality of the Namaz is not affected by them. It is at all necessary to eat one's heart over the thing. However, the endeavor should always be there, and by saying the Namaz with an intelligent apprehension of the meaning of the verses recited and focussing attention on the presence of the Almighty, the possibility of being drawn away by outside ideas can be cut down to the minimum.

Lastly, it is profitable to spend some time in the company of earnest devotees of God and watch them at prayer whose Namaz is perfect by his grace, or, at least, it is perfect as compared to ours. For those who cannot make use of this suggestion, the next best thing is to study books which are likely to foster in them the desire to excel in their prayers and also furnish necessary guidance, like Imam Ghazali;s Kimya-e-Saadat. There is a small booklet by the person writer, entitled, Namaz ki Haqiqat, that might also prove helpful. In it, he has collected valuable extracts from the writings of the revered theological masters and other Holy men of undisputed excellence and brought them togather. As the contents of the book are, largely, not his own he has only translated most of them from persian and Arabic into simple Urdu he has no hesitation in saying that, whenever, he reads it himself, it does him a lot of good, and inspires him to greater effort. This has been inserted here simply in the hope that it might succeed in inducing

the reader to a perusal of the book, leading on to some improvement in the quality and merit of his Namaz, in which case the author, too, would become entitled to a part of the accruing Divine reward on the strength of the Tradition that "A person who guides another to a deed of virtue will have the same recompense for it as the doer of the deed."

An advice given by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to a Companion may also be usefully recalled in the course of present discussion. The advice, which has the added advantage of not being very difficult to act upon, was to offer up each Namaz in the spirit that it was the last one of his life. In practice it would mean that as a worshipper stood up for prayer he should imagine that it might well be the last opportunity for him to pay homage in that form to the Almighty. Having got into that frame of mind, the urge should be to say the prayers in as fitting a manner as possible. This recipe will, Insha Allah, prove most effective in endowing the Namaz with the warmth and vitality of faith.

Another thing I would like to mention before bringing the theme of Namaz to a close is that, apart from the five obligatory prayers of the day, there are some others known as Sunnat and Nafl. The Sunnat and Nafl prayers that precede or follow the obligatory prayers are happily not neglected by use in the normal course, but where the rest are concerned, viz., Tahajjud, Chasht, Ishraq, Awwabin, which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to offer up himself as commend to his Companions, we are found hoplessly wanting and careless. I venture to suggest that those of us whom God has, in His infinite Mercy, blassed with any amount of religious solicitude should realise the worth of the boon and be grateful to Him for it, and the best way t express the gratitude is to derive the maximum benefit from it, one of the methods of which is to recite the Naft prayers at least at the stipulated hours.

The Tahajjud habit needs particularly to be cultivated diligently. from both, the Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), it is evident that the Tahajjud occupies the most vital place among all non-obligatory prayers. It seems to me from the manner it has been spoken of in Sura-i-Muzammil that by virtue of its inherent potentialities it should have been an obligatory prayer but was made optional for the sake of the Ummat's convenience. Some theologians are even of the opinion that it was an obligatory prayer at first which was relegated to the possition of the Sunnat as a mark of concession to faithful when the second section of sura-i-Muzammil was revealed. Some of its special virtues and the unique radiance with which it is invested do, indeed, lend it an eminence over every other prayer. It was during the Tahajjud that the feet of the sacred Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to swell up (due to long stretches of standing), and, yet, he would not cut it short. He would inform that certain special graces of the Lord that were concentrated on the earth at that hour could not be entered into at any other time. He used to wake up his wives when the time for Tahajjud came and advise the Companions to be zealously vigilant in the observance of that prayer. A Tradition of his reads: Hold fast to the Tahajjud for such has been the practice of the devoted servants of God before you. It will take nearer to him as it did in their case, and serve as an atonement for your sins and guard you against evil."

Admittedly, these teachings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) were not meant for the Companions alone. But for all Muslims and at all times. We should therefore, feel about them as if they were being addressed to us directly by him and reposing full trust in the virtues of the Tahajjud, as described in the above Tradition, try earnestly to carry it out into practice.

The pre-eminence of Tahajjud is further born out by another Tradition in which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has induced men of faith to avail themselves of its glorious spiritual possibilities in these words: "In the home if the husband wakes up first for the Tahajjud prayer he should try to awaken his also wife also to the extent of administering a mild dash of water on her face, In the same way, if the wife be the first to arise, she should try to wake up her husband also to the extent of administering a mild dash of water on his face. "On such couples the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has conferred a bountiful blessing. At Some places in the Tradition, the words of the blessing are, "May the choicest favors of God be on them ", and at others, "May such husbands and wives thrive forever and remain permanently in bloom.

For no other Sunnat or Nafl Prayer has the Prophet (Peace be upon him) offered such powerful inducements. This is proof enough of its supreme importance among all optional prayers. Indeed, in one Tradition, it is laid down in plain, simple words that " after the obligatory prayers, Tahajjud is the most outstanding ". Yet, as it is very testing for the flesh to leave the bed at that early hour, even the religiously-nclined among us shirk from it, although this very factor is no less responsible for the high value the prayer carries. Says the Quran:

"Truly, the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (framing) the word (of prayer and praise)" (Quran : Muzammil, 1)

It further appears from the Quran that the Tahajjud is characteristically beneficial in the development of moral stemina for struggle in the path of God and his religion. In Sura-i-Muzammil we find the verse given below occuring immediately after the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was advised to offer up the prayer, more or less, during the later half of the night:

"Soon, We shall send down to thee a weighty Message". The aim, ostensibly, was to impress upon the Prophet (Peace be upon him) the truth that the Tahajjud afforded an excellent preparation for the task that lay ahead of him. It had the capacity to impart the rare strength needed for the successful accomplishment of his mission.

It was the custom of the Companions to say a long prayer at the time of the Tahajjud, the chief reason being that the practice of reciting the Quran from the written or printed text had not yet come into vogue. people generally knew the whole or a substantial part of it by heart, and would recite it at the Tahajjud. I have rad it somewhere a Companion once complained against his son to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that instead of reciting

the Quran in the night at Tahajjud, he did it during the day so outrageous did it seen to him. Anyway, it is a well known fact that the Companions used to read out long passages from the Quran at the Tahajjud, as if that was for them the right time for the recitation of the book. We ought to do the same on our part. We should, if we remember any considerable part of the Quran, not seek to get done quickly with the Tahajjud by reciting the smaller Suras. We have just recalled how the feet of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to swell up during it because of the long hours of standing. Besides the Namaz, the Tahajjud is also the ideal time for Zikar and Tilawat. So has said the Prophet (Peace be upon him) : "God is most near to his servant during the later stages of the night; hence, if you can bring yourself to be among his servants who remember him in Zikr at that time, let it surely be so, and waste not those precious hours in negligence ".

This was by way; otherwise, our main theme were the Nafl prayers as part of the general discussion on the need for improve- ment in the standard of our Namaz. In addition to Tahajjud, among the prescribed Nafl Prayers, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) has described great merit and advantage in the one known as Chasht. We will confine ourselves to quoting these two Traditions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) concerning his prayer.

A celestial Tradition (meaning a Tradition spoken by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) on behalf of God) tells that it is a standing offer of the Almighty to everyone of his servants that, "O son of Adam, you take upon yourself only this much of responsibility, that you will render four Rakats of Namaz to me during the earlier part of the day, i.e. at Chasht, and I, in return for that, will suffice for you (i.e. hold myself responsibile to provide for your needs) till the day is done."

The other Tradition says, " Anyone who offers up two Rakats of Namaz at Chasht regularly will be forgiven of his sins even though they be as copious as the foam of the sea."

In the first Tradition, as one would have noticed, four Rakats were prescribed for the Chasht prayer, and, in the second, only two; in some other Traditions, there are mentioned six, eight and even twelve Rakats. This variation is due to the fact that the number of Rakats is not so very important in the Nafl prayers, as in the obligatory ones. if one offers up a minimum of two Rakats at the time of a Nafl prayer one's duty is done, and if more, it is better and will entitle the devotee to greater remuneration.

After the Namaz, the next in order of preference among the fundamentals comes the Zakat. The basic function of Zakat is the same as that of any form of worship. It is the seeking of God's pleasure and the cleansing and purification of the self. It is patent fact that, more frequently then not, sins and crimes have their origin in the just for wealth and the lust for power and between the two, the former is a more common malady. Zakat is a means for breaking the force and the malignancy of the malady of lust for wealth. In the Quran, Zakat is often mentioned simultaneously with Namaz which shows that it is almost equal to the latter in importance in the Islamic organization of worship. When, after the death of the Prophet, some of the Arab tribes refused to pay the Zakat, the

Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr, felt compelled to declare war upon them, and, in taking that extreme step, he had the full support of the Holy Companions. Such, in a word, is the importance of Zakat in Islam.

The financial demands of the faith from its followers do not end with Zakat. They extend further and assume many other forms. It is clearly stated in a Tradition that, "Besides Zakat, there are some other claims, too, on wealth:. These other claims have been thoroughly enumerated by the theological doctors at their proper place.

The manner in which the virtues of spending in the way of God are extolled in the Quranand the various styles of expression that have been employed for the purpose go to confirm that it is an indispensable constitute of faith. Yet, universal as the indifference of Muslims to their religion has come to be, nowhere is it more evident than in this particular sphere. People have become so selfish these days and the love of money has grown so enormously among them that the practice of sharing one's wealth with a needy and indigent brother is disappearing fast from their midst and, even those who do so, a majority of them are guilty of gross carelessness with respect to the laws and regulations Divinely laid down for it, with the consequence that they do not derive the full benefit from it as promised in the Quran.

When Zakat is a fundamental obligation like the Namaz, the desire should naturally, be to discharge it with equal care and ardency. A Zakat that is paid in an off-hand manner, without the urge to make the most of it by praying scrupulous regard to all the relevent rules and requirements, is akin to a Namaz which is offered up in haste and without proper attention, lacking in both, life and luster. Some of the ways of vesting the Zakat with a greater inner content can be:

First, to get to know all the rules and principles of Zakat and cultivate sincerity of purpose.

Second, to take good care to spend it on what seem to be the most deserving and legitimate parties and object, that is, parties and objects in spending on which there is the hope of the greatest reward from God.

Third, to hate the idea of having bestowed any favour on the person to whom it is given away, nor to look down upon him in any way on that account, but, on the other hand, to feel genuinely obliged to him because it was through his agency that one was enabled to acquit oneself of the duty properly and well, and to acknowledge it ungrudgingly by word and deed.

Fourth, to call up the conviction to the mind, while giving away the Zakat, as in the case of Namaz, that God is present here, there and everywhere, seeing all and observing everything: He is watching this act of mine, as well as the intent that is operating behind it, and it is in his presence and by his command that I am doing this little service to a servant of his.

If the Zakat begins to be paid in the manner and spirit indicated above, its beneficial results can be experienced in this very existence; such abundance and prosperity will be witnessed in trade and agriculture that men will be astounded.

The third prectical plank is the Roza (or the fast) it is a most excellent means for the development of the celestial element in our nature. It purches the self and is specially beneficial for cultivating Divine virtues like contentment, alm endurance, and piety. During the fast a person forges a special link with the Celestial world by crushing down the animal appetites. But these results can be achieved only when it is undertaken with all the solemnity of an act of worship, the instructions laid down in its context are sincerely obeyed and nothing is done that may militate against the sanctity of the deed. The first thing in this regard is to leave all sinful conduct strictly alone, more particularly that which appertains to the mouth and the tongue. If this is not done, the fast will be bereft of all spiritual consequences. We say this on the authority of the Tradition that, "If a person does not abstain from falsehood, deceit and perfidy while fasting, it is immaterial to God that he goes without food and drink, and does hunger and thirst."Another Tradition, to the same effect, reads. "Many are there among those who keep the fasts that gain nothing from them except hunger and thirst."

It follows, therefore, that our ambition should be to obtain the maximum advantages from the fasts as from Namaz and Zakat, in terms of our spiritual progress and evolution. What is required for this, first and foremost, is to refrain from everything that is forbidden, including the Makroohat. The sins emanating from the mouth are particularly to be guarded against, so much so that it is prohibited in the Tradition even to shout or to talk in a loud voice during a fast. Conversely, the endeavor ought to be to practice greater goodness and pay more attention to the deeds of virtue during the period of fasting, especially to those that are associated with the mouth. e.g., Zikr and Tilawat.

Another thing is to meditate, more and more, when fasting, on the Glory of God and on his will and command. The devotee is advised to dwell mentally, again and again, on the theme that God is omnipresent and All-Observing and it is in response to his command that he is refraining from eating and drinking and that the particular act of his is being watched by him. When the pangs of hunger and thirst may grow strong, he should tel himself that although food and water were easily available, he had to go without them because such was the wish of the Almighty and his Divine pleasure; on that day his Lord and creator was pleased with that very hunger and thirst, and the suffering he was undergoing then was to be instrumental in saving him from a terrible agony on the Hereafter.

The Practice of eating lightly at Iftar and Sahar adds to the luster of the fasts, whereas overeating fills them up with gloom and destroys their intrinsic value.

I will now say a word about the Nafl fasts. While, in the case of Namaz, there is scarcely anyone among us who confines himself only to the Farz Rakats and omits altogather those that are Sunnat and Nafl Such a thing is not well thought of generally with the fasts it is not so. We, commonly, do no more than to observe the Ramzan fasts, or if

anyone goes very far, he just keeps an additional fast for Arafa, Yaum-i-A,shoora, and Shab-i-Barat, although the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as his habit was to offer up numerous Nafl prayers in addition to the Farz ones and encourages the others to follow his example so also did he keep the Nafl fasts excessively, apart from the obligatory fasts of the month of Ramzan. and persuade his followers to act similarly. He kept the fast nearly always on the 13th and 15th of each month, and, according to some chroniclers, also on every Monday and Thursday. We should strive to revive this tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) by our action. The Roza is a thing of great intrinsic auspiciousness; it possesses a profound ability to sanctify the soul and endue it with Heavenly radiance.

I, moreover, believe that the merit of our fast in the Ramzan suffers a great deal because of the fact that we do not observe fasting at all during the rest of the year. Fasting for a few days each month will keep us in tune inwardly with the spirit of that form of worship and, then, when the month of Ramzan will come, it will find us ready to partake fully of its transcendental glory.

It is narrated about the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, while his custom it was to keep fast on a number of days every month, he would do so excessively in the month of Sha'ban, sometimes for the whole month. One of the reasons, perhaps, was that he wanted to produce within himself as the blessed month Ramzan approached the right spiritual atmosphere in order to take the fullest advantage of its redoubtable inner richness.

Whatever it may be, it is important to cultivate enthusiasm for the Nafl fasts, as it is for the Nafl prayers, and observe them duly. We should keep fast on the 13th, and 15th of each month for such was the custom of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), and, further, it is stated in a tradition that,"To keep fast yearly during the month of Ramzan and on three days each month for the rest of the year is equal in Divine recompense and reward to fasting throughout the year.

And, lastly, the Haj. The basic purpose of the Haj pilgrimage is the same as that of any other mode of worship the propitiation of the Lord, and, yet, there is also something unique about it.

There exists a special relationship, a peculiar affinity, between the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and, through him, between his Ummat and Hzrat Ibrahim. The Haj, in truth, constitutes, both in its form and essence, the symbolization of the latter's supreme devoutness and matchless submission to the will of God, and the idea underlying its ordainment is that every Muslim who can afford to undertake the pilgrimage should, at least, once in his life, betake himself to the place where the most glorious episode of Hazrat Ibrahim's life of utter dedication to his Creator had taken place, and cast himself, for the time being, in the role of that superbly self-effacing, all sacrificing to the path of that true friend, slave and devotee of the Divine, and of his respectful devotion to the distinctive practices the Lord has ordained for the occasion and create within himself the sincere urge to dye his entire existence, inwardly as well as outwarldly, in the hue of that

august patriarch and give his soul a chance to take in its share of the magnificent spiritual glories of the place.

I shall dwell on further on the essential beauty and richness of the Haj because these can be understood properly only when one experiences them personally during the course of the pilgrimage. This much, however, I will certainly say that when, by the Grace of God, you may decide to undertake the pilgrimage concentrate more on preparing yourself inwardly and spiritually for it than on anything else. Sadly enough, people bestow the greatest thought on the material comforts on the journey, they even want to take with them such trivial articles as salt, pepper and pickles and equip themselves with as many as ten suits of clothes, they get occupied with these preparations for months in advance but do nothing by way of making themselves fit spiritually for the great occasion. The result is that gain nothing from it, and come back as they had gone. It is not that a pilgrim is not allowed to furnish himself with material necessities before he sets out for the pilgrimage within a proper limit it is essential to do so, but these things do not make the real equipment for the Haj. The real equipment lies in getting oneself ready with all the information needed for the carrying out the duty and in the acquirement of that inner fitness which enables one to receive the rich spiritual benefits accruing from it. An important part of the endeavour to establish Haj must be to create in the people's mind an awareness of this fact. Without it, the Haj will remain a soulles from and an empty ceremony.

So far we have examined the four fundamental duties of Namaz, Zakat, Roza and Haj in the course of our study of worship in Islam. After the affirmation of faith, they constitute an end in themselves and are to be carried out in their prescribed forms. They provide the practical of a Muslim being really a one.

There are many things occupying a place of importance in religion for which no definite procedure has been prescribed by the Shariat only the principles governing them have been laid down, nor do they make an end in themselves; they are a means to an end. For instance, it is a religious obligation to learn the faith and to reach it to other, and to serve and to defend it to the best of one's ability, but, as you know, no precise method has been formulated for these purposes as in case of Namaz, Zakat etc. These duties are also not an end in themselve the study of faith is necessary because without it people will not be able to discharge their religious oblivious obligations properly; and, so on. But with the four compulsory modes of worship it is not so. They possess, as we have pointed out a few lines earlier, a definite, unalterable form and are also their own end. Finally, the word 'Islam' denotes submission. It is another name for surrendering oneself entirely to God. No other act of religion expresses this condition more reason that suggests itself to the mind is that these duties, if performed in the right spirit, exert their influence on all the spheres of existence and are capable of transforming the whole life into one of faith and submission. The stipulation, of course, is there that they retain some inner resemblance with the Namaz,Zakat, Roza and Haj of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and do not slip into a deed formality. Its is without a trace of doubt that these foundational duties are endowed with tremendous potentialities. If our prayers and our fasts and the Zakat and the Haj not making themselves felt in our lives to any

noteworthy degree it is because they do no longer pulsate with life.

One of the changes that come over the followers of the Prophets with the passage of time is that their acts of worship degene- rate into rituals. The Muslims have not proved themselves to be above the operation of this rule. Such of them as have shut their eyes completely to the need of abiding by the compulsory items of worship and are, for practical purposes, leading a life of infidelity are outside the purview of our discussion at the moment. What they are going to end up in will come before them on the day of reckoing. The mournful truth is that even with Muslims like us who observe the basic obligations of worship regularly the case is that we are simply hugging their skeletons from which the spirit has departed. Very few of us can truthfully claim that the generalization we have just indulged in does not apply to them. Or, at least, those sections of the Ummat which still adhere by the fundamental obligations would be finding themselves in an entirely different state today. They would be their own example in the world for moral integrity, for social uprightness and for the excellence of their conduct in the practical and material walks of life. The lives of these men would be the most striking models of piety and goodness. Whoever came to know them would notice in them a peculiar charm and a unique fragrance. This is not a flight of fancy but truth. The few deep-hearted men of genuine faith and endeavor that provide an exception to the general gloom men whose Namaz, Zakat, Roza and Haj have anything in common, in merit and substance, with those offered by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) even today make the finest specimens of humanity and people are struck by an inexplicable magnetism of spirit, an un-definable pervasive quality, as they come into contact with them. The tragedy of our times in that extremely rare as such men have become, the desire to seek them out and to profit by their company has become rarer. Should Allah grant one the good fortune to dedicate oneself to the task of Islamic regeneration, one's chief work would lie in injecting fresh life and vitality into the foundational duties by bringing the Namaz, Roza and Haj of the sacred Prophet (Peace be upon him).

Moral Virtues

Morality, like worship, forms an important branch of religion. In a way, it is more important than the other branches because it is here that man has within his grasp the opportunity of functioning as God's deputy and vicegerent. Good morals are Devine attributes and it is demanded of us to produce them in ourselves as far as our humanity allows. A Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) says, "Let the virtues of God be your virtues."

To appreciate fully the distinctive merit of good morals it is of advantage first to know as a basic principle that human deeds that are capable of caning God's pleasure and on which there is a reward from him are divided into four groups.

The first group include acts a man performs to express and affirm while paying his tribute to the Glory and Worship fullness of God, his own utter helplessness before and complete submission to him. The acts of worship fall within this category.

The second includes acts a man is compelled to perform by the very nature of his being

and the material wants of his earthly existence, but if they are performed according to the wishes and dictates of the Lord, they become worthy of his approbation and reward. For instance, a man engages himself in an occupation for the purpose of earning his daily sustenance or he gets married because their is a natural urge to be fulfilled, but God has laid down certain rules in respect of these activities;now, if he pays due regard to the Divine ordinances while pursuing his profession or in the conduct of his married life, everything that he does in these spheres becomes an act of religion and entitles him to a reward from God. This aspect is characteristic of acts we sun up under the two headings of Muamalat (monetary affairs) and Muasharat (social conduct).

The third includes functions like the propagation of faith, religious preaching and instruction, the rendering of assistance to the sacred cause, the acceptance of trial and suffering in its path, the making of sacrifices for its victory and the forbidding of evil and the ordering of good deeds, which are in reality the province of the prophets, and when men other then them make these duties their own they get elevated to the status of the deputies and agent of the Divine Apostles. They then operate as successors to the Holy mission of those closen servants of God. These deeds are very pleasing to the Almighty and there can be no doubt about the great reward that is on them. What is more, they engender in the doer of them a resemblance with the Prophets (Peace be upon him) which cannot be acquired in any other way.

The fourth includes deeds which are associated with the vice gerencey of God. This is the grand distinguishing feature of the moral virtues. For example, mercy is a virtue which is essentially a Divine attribute. It is because of this attribute that he is glorified as the most benevolent, the most compassionate, and his wish is that his servants should also cultivate the noble quality and behave with mercy and compassion towards his diserving creatures. Similarly, forgiveness and the hiding of the faults and sins of others are Divine virtues and we men are required to produce them in ourselves as well. The same is the case with the other excellent moral qualities like modesty. temperateness, beneficence, charity, generosity, justice and fair-mindedness, and the capacity to admire what is good and to despise what is wicked. All these are Divine qualities which we are called upon to furnish ourselves with.

In brief, in the field of morality alone, among all the fields of human endeavor, does man operate as the vicegerent of God in its domain he does what God himself doth do. This destination is shared by no other department of man's existence. Hence, the intrinsic superiority of morals over the rest of the aspects of human conduct.

We will now see what great importance has the Prophet (Peace be upon him) attached to moral virtues. He says:

"The Lord has sent me down as his Apostle that I may evolve moral virtues to highest perfection." (Mishkat)

"Muslims who possess better morals are the most perfect in faith ." (Mishkat)

"On the day of judgement the moral virtues of a Muslim will (prove to be) the heaviest item in the scales of Deeds." (Ibid)

Yet, inspite of these clear pronouncements, a majority of even those among us who may be said to be men of religion present a most disappointing picture : they do show some awareness of the importance of worship, but where the Divine commands governing social and moral behaviour and the conduct of monetary affairs are concerned, they pay littile head to them. Many of them, indeed, seem to labour under the impression that these commands are meant for those who expire for exceptional spiritual advancement while for salvation only the Namaz and Roza are enough, although moral rectitude is as much necessary for deliverance in the Hereafter as worship.
In the Quran and the Traditions the same stress is laid on good morals as on worship, and moral transgressors have been given the warning of a chastisement as equally severs as that promised to the defaulters in the matter of prayer, fasting etc., For instance, stinginess is a moral fault. Now, see how strongly has it been condemned by the Quran :

"And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which God hath given of his grace think that it is good for them : soon the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgement."
(Quran : Aal-i-Imran, 18)

In like manner, in Sura-i-Humaza, the Quran gives the tidings of hell for moral diseases like excessive love of wealth, contemp-
tuous upbraiding, double-dealing, scandle-mongering and malicious back-biting.
"Woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and backbiter who pileth up wealth and layeth it by thinking that his wealth could make him last forever ! By no means ! He will be sure to be thrown into that which breaks to pieces."
(Quran : Humaza, 1)

So, also, does the Prophet (Peace be upon him) of a number of moral vices he has emphatically stated that they are sure to plunge one into the all consuming fire of the hell. Take vanity. About it he says :
" He who harbors vanity in his heart even by an atom shall not enter Heaven." (Muslim)

Or, read these Traditions of his :
" Anyone who engages in malicious fault-finding or pries into the secrets of others and gives publicity to them shall not be admitted into the Paradise." (Bukhari)

" On the last day the biggest loser will be the hypocrite, who, when he goes to one party talks in one voice and, when to the other party. Talks in an other voice. (Muslim)

" God will show no compassion to him who shows no compassion to his fellow-beings." (Bukhari)

" A woman will find her way into the Hell simply for the reason of her cruelty to a cat which she had lead in captivity and gave it not a morsel of food till it died of starvation."

(Muslim)

In contrast to the above two Traditions, those who are kind and merciful have been given by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) the assurance of a rich reward :
" God will have mercy upon them that are merciful. Show compassion to those who dwell on the earth : He who dwells in the Heavens will show compassion to you." (Abu Dawood)

In another Tradition we are informed that "Awoman was granted remission of her sins because her heart melted at the sight of a dog who was dying of thirst, and, she saved its life by drawing water from the well, at great pains to herself, and giving it to drink."
Apart from the Traditions giving the warning of dradful chastisement in the Hereafter to those who cherish wrong moral ideals and behave accordingly, there are in which it is plainly stead about certain moral vices that their presence in a man is enough to disqualify him from a being a Muslim. Thus, it is related that once the Prophet (Peace be upon him) declared with great feeling that "I swear by God in whose power lies my life that no one can be a believer unless he attains the state of desiring for his brother what he desires for himself."

On another occasion, it is reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) spoke out the following words: "By God, he is not a Muslim, by God, he is not a believer, by God, he is devoid of the wealth of faith."

"Who?" the Companions inquired. "The III-fated man", the Prophet (Peace be upon him) replied, "from whose mischief his neighbors are not secure."

There also occurs a Tradition to the effect that, " That callous, unfeeling person is not a Muslim who eats to hissatisfaction while his neighbor, by his side, goes without a meal."

Now, in these Traditions the vices for which the chastisement of Hell has been promised or which have been described as destructive of faith or inimical to salvation all belong to the realm of morality. This will show in what great value does Islam hold good ethical conduct........To quote from Ibn-i-Taimiyah in Kitab-i-Imam : "The position of things about which it is said in the Traditions that whoever is guilty of them will not be admitted into the Heaven or that he is devoid of faith is, at the minimum, that they are prohibited in the Shariat and it is the duty (of a Muslim) to abstain from them."

Be that as it may, normal virtues are not the ultimate objectives one may, strive after only if the aim should be to become a saint or a spiritual luminary. They are essential condition of faith, it being as much indispensable for the saving of the soul to develop good moral qualities and avoide moral evils as are the offering up of prayer and the observance of fasts. Particularly unneces-
sary is the acquirement of virtues on which special stress has been laid in the Quran and the Traditions, like fortitude, the reposing of trust in the will of God, truthfulness, honesty and integrity, the keeping of promises, sincerity, genuine and whole-
hearted love of God and the Prophet (Peace be upon him) wishing well and thinking

nobly of others, and maintenance of secrecy over their faults and misdeeds, compassion, forgiveness, suppression of anger, generosity, justice and fair-mindedness, humility and meekness and love and hatred not for self-satisfaction but for the sake of God. In the same way, it is of utmost importance to purge oneself clean of the reverse qualities, known, in common parlance, as vices.

The Quranic verses and the sayings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) relating to moral behaviour have been discussed at great length by the author in his book entitled, Islam Kiya Hai and at still greater length in the second volume of his Ma,arif-ul-Hadees. He will, therefore, content himself with this brief chapter here and pass over to an examination of Islamic teachings concerning monetary dealings and social conduct.

Monetary Dealings And Social Conduct

The teachings covered under the two titles of Muamalat (monetary dealings) and Muasharat (social conduct) appertain to the needs and urges of our material and social eistence, and it is a great blessing of God that by providing rules and regulations with respect to them. He has elevated them into means of gaining access unto him in this world and of earning his reward in the hereafter. By Muamalat we mean affairs which have a monetary aspect to them, such as, business transactions, debt, contract, service and labour, and the other term. Muasharat, is applied to the behaviour we give countenance to in our dealings with those with whom we come into contact either permanently, as with parents, husbands, children, brothers, sisters and other relatives, and neighbors or temporarily, as, for instance, fellow travelers in the course of a journey, or office or business colleagues and partners.

These spheres of human activity command, like morality, a place of great significance in religion. In fact, from one point of view, they may be said to be matters of highest importance because they involve the keenest struggle between the Divine will and one's own inner impulsion. Let us take an illustration. In business, the profit-motive appears to demand, and the bidding of the heart also often is, that we should exploit every situation to the best of our advantage and make as such money out of every transaction as we can without giving a thought to ethics or morality, but the verdict of God's religion is that whatever happens, even if it leads to total loss and bankruptcy, there must be no wavering from the path of truth and integrity and the law Divinely ordained for the occasion. Similarly, in the sphere of social behaviour, there is frequently a tussle between what God wants and our natural instincts desire. Thus, it is in Muamalat and Muashrat that man's loyalty to God is put to the severest test.

Furthermore, these departments have a bearing on the rights of man also. Prayer and fasting, although they make the fundamentals of religion, and, in view of this, rank only next to the affirmation of faith, are exclusively the rights of God, and who ever neglects them sins against him alone. Transgression in respect of them is not incapable of condemnation by the Lord, in his Infinite Mercy, if suplication is made to him with proper humility and earnestness. But where duties appertaining to monetary affairs and social behaviour are concerned, it is vastly different. In their case, neglect would amount to sin both against God and man, and, we know, how niggardly we human beings can be

when it comes to forgiving and forgetting. The aggrived among us are not likely to forego their pound of flesh on the last Day. A Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) says :

"Some people will take with them from here a large stock of virtue earned through deeds like prayer fasting, charity and alms-giving, but their conduct in relation to social and monetary affairs will be poor they will have aggressed against someone's rights, wounded the feelings of somebody, indulged in back biting and, so on. When they will arrive at the place of Reckoning, on the last day, those against whom they have been guilty of those transgressions will rise up in petition and appeal to God for justice. The Almighty God will them do justice and deliver his Judgement : their good deeds will be taken away from them and transferred to the aggrieved parties, and when these will not suffice, the sins of the aggrieved parties will be forced down upon them and, ultimately, they will be thrown into the hell."

It is on account of this, perhaps, that the correction and reformation of one's conduct in money matters and in the matter of social responsibilities has been described clearly in a Tradition as a more worthy act than the carrying out of prayer, fasting, charity and alms-giving. This Tradition has been reproduced in Mishkat Sharif on the strength of Tirmizi and Abu Dawood and its narrator is Abu Darda (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) who tells that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) once enquired of him, "May I tell you something that is superior even to Roza, Sadqa ? "Do, please", replied Abu Darda (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala). Whereupon, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "it is the setting right of mutual relations and of one's conduct where the monetary factor is involved. Faultiness of Muamalat and Muashrat is a razor that shaves from the roots (not the hair,but faith)." Yet, the blunt truth is that even in the fairly devout religious circles adequate attention is not paid to the right ordering of life in these spheres with the result, in Muamalat and Muashrat, the conduct of those of us whose state as regards the various duties of worship is pretty good falls short of the standard laid down by Islam. In these circumstances, it is palpably foolish to expect our prayers to be heard and supplications to be answered.

In Mishkat Sharif it is reported from Abdullah bin Omar (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) on the authority of Musnad-i-Ahmed, that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) once remarked that, if a person buys a cloth for ten Dirhams, and out of them one is tainted (i.e. it has acquired by unfair means), none of his Namaz will be acceptable to God as long as he wears the cloth". It is further reported that after Abdullah bin Omar (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) had narrated the Tradition he put his fingers to his ears and proclaimed before those present : "May I turned deaf if I have heard not the Prophet (Peace be upon him) say these words."

To quote another Tradition in the same vein, it was said by Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, "God is pure himself, and accepts only offerings that are pure. " Then, after urging upon the people the need to earn a clean livelihood, he related the following parable, "A man undertakes a long and tedious journey (to supplicate to God at a sacred place) and arrives (at his destination) in such a shape that his hair is dishevelled the body is covered from head to foot with dust; he throws up his hands towards the Heaven and cries out, 'O

Lord !, O my Preserver! but his sustenance is of the impure and he has been brought up on what is polluted how on earth can his prayer, then, be granted?

The inference, clearly, is that the petition of a person whose business or professional conduct is not clean and above board and who lives on dishonest income will never be granted by God even though he travels a thousand miles to beseech him at a halved place. Yet another Tradition runs to the effect, "A body that has been reared on unlawful sustenance shall not gain entry into the Heaven."

The Prophet (Peace be upon him) has expressed his strong resentment against those who indulge in unfair practices in business. He painly has refused to have anything to do with them. It is related from Abu Huraira (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) in Saheeh-i-Muslim that the sacred Prophet (Pease be upon him) once heap and to pass by a heap of grain (which a trader had piled up). The Prophet (Pease be upon him) trust his hand into the happened it was discovered that under the surface the grain was moist. On being questioned, the trader explained that it had been caught in the little shower that had fallen. The Prophet (Pease be upon him) said, "Then why did you not place the wet grain on the top so that buyers could know that it was not dry? " And to this he added the reprimand: "Whoever deceives in buisness is not mine."

On the social plane, the Holy Prophet is equally severe on those who do not live upto the Islamic conception of polite behaviour. " He who is not respectful to his elders", he says, "and affectionate to those who are younger to him is not one of us." 3 It will, thus, be seen, in the light of Ibn-i-Taimiyah's dictum referred to in the previous chapter, that to behave with respect towards those who are younger in age is a religious and legal necessity in Islam, although it is purely a matter of social intercourse.

At the base of all cultural refinement and gentleman-liness there lies the two fold principle; firstly, never to wound any one's feelings, and, secondly, to do one's best (within the four corners of the Shariat, naturally,) to bring him solace and comfort, to fulfil his rights and to keep him well pleased, as may be his due. The degree of excellence required by Islam in this connection can well be imagined from the under-mentioned Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him):

"When three persons are sitting togather, two of them should not start a conversation between themselves, leaving the third alone (it might hurt his sentiments and make him feel neglected); they should wait for a four person to join in, who can keep him company. Then they can go to some other place and have their talk."

Unfortunately, however, we have now sunk so deep in the abyss of moral and social degradation that we seem to derive pleasure from inflicting pain and sorrow upon others. We can, indeed, never attain perfection in our faith or can our living ever become genuinely Islamic until we brought about a big improvement in our conduct in the domains of Muamalat and Muasharat.
We will now call a halt to this chapter. Like morality, Muamalat and Muasharat have also been elaborated upon in proper detail in Islam Kiya Hai. For a more thorough study

of them the reader is referred to one of the standared collections of the Tradition.

Service In The Cause Of Faith

Islam, as you would be knowing very well by now, stands for that wholesome way of life and that Divine guidance the inspired communication of which has been reaching mankind from God through his selected Apostles. The mission of the apostle in this behalf was comprised of two parts: to receive knowledge of that way of life and that guidance from God by means of the revealed word, and, then, to preach it to fellow-men, to instruct them in it, and to persuade them to put it into action in their daily life.

The first of the mission ended with the termination of the luminous line of the Apostles. The very term. Termination Apostleship, denotes that, after Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), no one is going to be raised up as the revealer and interpreter of the Divine will in the world, to aspect and to obey whom as a Divine Apostle might be an obligation for men. The law and guidance brought by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) sufficient since they are to meet the needs of humanity till the end of time, and guaranteed as their preservation is by God have permanently ruled out the necessity of another messenger above. But the second part of the Apostolic work, the preaching of Divine law and guidance and the persuading of men to enact them in their every day existence, continues as ever, and it is the unique privilege of Muslims that, as successors of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), the sacred duty of discharging this responsibility and carrying ahead the Holy mission of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to fulfillment has now finally fallen to their lot.

The Prophet had begun his historic task in Mecca with preaching and invitation. He used to call the people to the Divine faith that was his first step. Then, as by the mercy of God, a few persons responded to the Divine call and those for themselves the true religion and the life of virtue towards which he invited, the training and instruction of the faithful, their moral and spiritual cleansing and purification and the allowing of the lawful and the prohibiting of the forbidden were added to his duties. Later, there came a time when it became necessary for the defence and progress of the Divine mission and for enabling more and more men to drink and the well of right belief and virtuous conduct to grapple with the forces of darkness that were threatening to put the light of faith or to restrict its radiance. The taking up of arms in support of faith Jehad thenceforth, also came to be a part of the program of Prophetic endeavor. And these duties continued to grow and expand steadily with the progress of time. In addition to instructing those who embraced Islam in the fundamentals of faith, the Prophet (Peace be upon him), then, would also impress upon them that they had to participate along with him and according to their means and circumstances in the moral and spiritual resuscitation of humanity and make his struggle their own. As long as the Prophet (Peace be upon him) remained in the world, his followers, under his inspiration, spared themselves neither life nor money to have their full share, as staunch friends and associates, in the glorious task of bringing light to mankind through guidance and instruction and through service and assistance in the cause of faith. They marched under him, without demur or hesitation, to do their duty by the Divine religion in the realm of missionary activity, in the areas of human uplift, correction and reformation and in the

field of battle. After the Prophet (Peace be upon him) death, the responsibility of keeping alive the lofty struggle, in all its aspects, fell upon the shoulders of the Ummat as a whole; which is now accountable for safeguarding and promoting the interests of faith as the successor of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), for all future time.

It is enough to know by way of the great sanctity and importance of this work that it is the work of the Prophets. We may, however, also take note of some of the pronouncements contained in relation to it in the Quran and the Traditions.

It would be apparent by now that there are many aspects to this endeavor including preaching and propagation of faith, religious instruction and reform, the sanctioning of what is right and the forbidding of what is wrong, and the taking up of arms in the cause of God. We will take the Quranic verses that exhort the Muslims to strive in the cause of faith in a general way and then those in which the various branches of the sacred duty are mentioned individually. We will begin with Sura-i-Maida:

" O ye who believe! Do your duty to God, seek the means of approach unto him, and strive with might and main in his cause: that ye may prosper." (Quran:Maida,6)

The concluding lines of Sura-i-Haj read:
"And strive in his cause as ye to strive, (with sincerity and discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is he who has named you Muslims both before and in this (revelation); that the Apostle may be a witness for you, and ye may be witness for mankind."
(Quran : Haj, 10)

In Sura-i-Saff, we find :
"O ye who believe! shall I lead you to a borgain that will save you from a grievous penalty? that ye believe in God and his Apostles, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of God with your property and your persons; that will be best for you if ye but knew. He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow and in beautiful mansions in Gardens of eternity: that is needed the supreme achivement. And another (favour will he bestow) which ye do love help from God and a speedy victory. So give the glade tidings to the believers. O ye who believe ! be ye helpers of God: as said Jesus, the son of Mary: "Who will my helper to (the work of) God?" said the disciples, "We are God's helpers!" (Quran : Saff, 2)

The manner of alluding to the stirring call of Jesus " who will be my helpers to (the work of) God? "response to it of his disciples " We are God's helper!" in the above Sura while enjoining the service of the faith on "those who believe" through the heart-warming slogan of "Be ye helpers of God" demonstrates it clearly that the Jehad (Struggle) and Nusrat (Help) spoken of in it the path os God since it is a well known fact about Jesus and his Apstles that they never took resort to arms. Their Jehad consisted exclusively of pain and suffering undergone willingly in the service of truth and faith.
In any case, the sevice and exertion spoken of in the above Suras as Jehad or Nusrat include every effort, endeavour or sacrifice made for the defence and promotion of the

Holy cause and the moral and spiritual progress ad uplift of mankind whether in the shape of preaching and propagation or training and instruction or warfare.

We will now consider some of the verses that deal with an individual branch of religious endeavor and call out the people to it specifically. Read Sura-i-Aal-i-Imran:

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: they are the one who will attain felicity." (Quran: Aal-e-Imran, 11)

It may be deduced from the phrase "out of you" in the verse we have just quoted that the duty of " inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong" is applicable not to the whole of the Ummat, but to action of it alone. But that would not be correct because, as we have seen, the verse itself adds that "they are the one who will attain felicity", and a matter on which depends the supreme issue of deliverence and salvation, cannot, obviously, be made the concern of any indevidual section or class. Moreover, four or five verses later, in the same Sura, it has been said that:
"Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God. (Quran : Aal-i-Imran, 12)

The very aim of raising up the Muslims, thus, is that they perform, in addition to bearing faith in God, the function of "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong." such being the case, the responsibility for the discharge of this duty rests with the body of the Ummat, as a whole, but the nature of the wrong the generally rules out the necessity or the possibility of every member of the community taking a hand in it. A task of this nature is, as a rule, best accomplished of a body of persons with the right aptitude and ability comes forward to devote itself to it while the rest of the people extend to it their ready support and co-operation. I suggest that the phrase " out of you" has been used solely for that reason. We will take another Sura, Maida, It says;
" Curses were pronounced on those among the children of Israel who rejected faith, by the tongue of David and Jesus, the son of Mary,: because they disobeyed and persisted in excess. Nor did they (usually) forbid one another the inequities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did."
(Quran : Maida, 11)

The above verses reveal how vital to the enjoyment of faith the duty of "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong" is. The disregard of it by the Israelites led to their damnation. The chief idea, in fact, in bringing it in here in this Sura was to warn the Muslims that the same fate awaited them too if they did not pay an adequate heed to their responsibilities in this regard.
After the Quranic verses we will reproduce a few of the sayings of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) on the subject. Here are three of them:

"By the Holy Being in whose power is my life, persevere with the task of 'enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong', otherwise God will surely send down upon

you a punishment. Then you will supplicate to him (for deliverance from the punishment), and the supplication will avail you nothing."

"If any one among you sees a wrong or a sin being perpetrated then (should he be in a position to do so) he should try to eradicate it by force, and if that not be possible he should try to eradicate it by raising his voice against it, and if that, too, be not possible, he should feel sore about it in the heart (and think of possible ways of removing the evil) this last state is the weakest state of faith."

"If a person living in a community transgresses against the law of God and the community does not set right his ways although it has the power and the authority to do so, God's chastisement will overtake it in this very existence."

To take now the duties of the preaching and propagation of faith, religious training and instruction and moral and spiritual guidance and reformation, the Quran declares in Sura-i-Ha Mim Sajda:

"who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to God, works righteousness, and says, I am of those who bow in Islam?" (Quran : Ha Mim Sajda, 5)

In other words, the most pleasing thing with God is the conduct of a person who, while blessed himself with the wealth of faith and virtuous living, invites the other to the same and strives for their reformation.To quote the Sura, Al-Asr:
"By (the token of) time (through the Ages), verily, man is in loss, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constance." (Quran : Asr)

It is reported by Sahl bin Sa,ad (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) one observed: "By the Almighty, if a single person receives guidance through you, it is better (for you) than the red camels."
Abu Masood Ansari (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) relates it from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, "A person who guides another to a deed of virtue will have the same recompense for it as the doer of the deed."
Aas bin Malik (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) has narrated that, "The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) once asked, 'Do you know who is the best in charity?' 'God and his prophet alone (Peace be upon him) know', replied the Companions. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) then explained, 'In charity the most high is God; then there is myself; after me is the man who having acquired the knowledge of Divine guidance strove to spread it and to take it on to others. Such a man will, on the day of Reckoning, arise as a chief and an officer,. (Or, that 'he by himself will rise up as a whole Ummat)

It is further reported by Abdul Rahiman bin abza that one day the Prophet (Peace be upon him) delivered a sermon, in the course of which he praised the deeds and achivements of some Muslim tribes in the cause of faith. He then asked, "(But) why is it that some other tribes do nothing by way of creating the consciousness and understanding of faith among their neighbors? They neither instruct nor inform them nor

carry out among them the duty of 'enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong? And why is it that some tribes make no effort to learn the faith and acquire an awareness of it from their neighbors? They go not to them for instruction and guidance. I declare by God that it is the duty of every group, class or tribe possessed of religious knowledge and awareness to take steps for the instruction of its neighbours to counsel them, to elighten them, to check them from sinning and to pursued them to do good deeds. In the same way, it is the duty of groups, classes or tribes. Who are ignorant of the teachings of faith, to learn them from the neighbours who know and seek guidance and enlightement from them. (That is, it is religious obligation for those who don't learn from those who do). I will wee that the group which fails in the discharge of its part of the duty soon receives a sever punishment."

What grave responsibility rests with the Muslims in the spheres of the propagation of faith and religious instruction guidance and reformation of the ignorant and the uninformed is abundantly evident from the tradition we have just seen. They can ignore it only at their peril the peril of incurring the wrath of God and the Prophet (Peace be upon him). This responsibility has again been emphasized by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) in this popular phrase of his, "Everyone of you is the keeper of his fold and he shall have to answer before God for the fold that he has in his keeping."

Jehad is another important from of religious endeavour. Before we studied the relevent Quranic verses and Traditions it is essential to know that war in itself is by no means a desirable thing. It is like a painful surgical operation which when occasion demands becomes the greatest measure of good-will to the patient. Thus, when it becomes unavoideable to take up arms for protection against a grave evil or mischief, or for the removal of some great hindrance between God and his servants or in the path of the seems to be a fair hope of success that way, the Divine faith, Islam, and Holy book, the Quran, sanction may, the prescribe the waging for war, under rules and conditions provided by them, to those of the faithful who possess the means necessary to the undertaking and the ability to acquite themselves of the responsibilities resulting from it.

Unfortunately, however, Jehad is one of the most misunderstood terms occurring in Islam. This arises out of the folly of confusing it with something of a Muslim national war, although all national wars and conflicts are strictly forbidden in Islam. A war will be considered on Islamic Jehad only if it is waged in the cause of God and with no other object than the Glory of his word, the attainment of his pleasure and the love of paradise, and iscontained within the bounds laid down it in the Shariat.

A war that is motivated by the urges of national self-interest or is fought purely for material or political ends, as the case usually is with the modern wars, can never be recognized by the Islamic faith and Shariat as a Jehad even though one of the parties to it may be Muslims. It will be condemned by Islam as a downright evil and its heroes and companions will stand in the eyes of God not a Mujahids (warriors in the defence of faith) but as criminals and the makers of mischief on the earth.

With this in the mind we proceed to examine some of the relevant Quranic texts and the

Traditions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). We will being with a verse from Sura-i-Haj because it was through it that the Muslims were initially granted the permission to take recourse to arms.

"To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, God is most powerful for their aid; (they are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defence of right, (for no cause) except that they say, 'Our Lord is God." (Quran : Haj,6)

The Sura goes on to explain the need and the wisdom of putting up brave resistance against oppression and injustice and to give assurance of the unchanging practice of God that he makes his help available to those who are the supporters of Truth. It declares that (about these oppressed people whom leave is given to make war in their defence, God is aware that):
(They are) those who, if we establish them the land. (will) establish regular prayer and regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong; with God rests the end (and decision) of (all affairs). (Quran : Haj, 6)

Two things emerge distinctly from the above verses. Firstly, the basic idea behind the mandate of Jehad that the might of the oppressors and tyrants who revel in creating obstacles in the way of the Truth and righteous doing and practice coercion and violence upon the seekers of faith may be destroyed and power may pass into the hands of the God-loving and the God-fearing who will establish goodness and piety in the land guard men against straying from the 'straight path'. In such an event, particularly when the situation be so gloomy that it cannot be altered without the employment of force, war will clearly prove to be a great blessing for mankind.
The second thing is that the Muslims who may take on the sacred responsibility of Jehad should be so staunch, earnest and well-conditioned in faith that if they came to rule over any part of the world as a result of the struggle they would utilize the opportunity establishment of God-worship and piety and the deliverance of mankind from untruth and tyranny.

But, tragically enough, the present-day Muslims, and, in particular, the ruling sections of the modern Muslim states, have shut their minds completely to this factor, and it is hard to imagine from the way they and the officers and men of the armed forces of their lands conduct themselves that they bear any relation to the high Islamic ideal of Jehad.

The following extract is from Sura-i-Tauba, in which, after eulogizing the role of those who fight in the way of God and extending to them the glad tidings of the Garden of paradise, a mention is made of some of the noble qualities they are expected to possess.

God hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return)is the Garden (of Paradise): they fight in his cause and slay and are slain; a promise binding on him in Truth, through the law, the Gospel and the Quran: and who is more faithful to his Covenant than God? Then rejoice in the Georgian which ye have concluded: that is the achivement supreme. Those that turn(to God) in repentance, that

serve him and praise Him; that wander in devotion to the cause of God; that bow and prostrate themselves in prayer; that enjoin good and forbid evil; and observe the limits set by God; (those do rejoice). So proclaim the glad tidings to the believers. (Quran : Tauba, 14)

And, in Sura-i-Saff, these glorious fighters who make their lives cheap in the path of God have been spoken of in this inspiring manner.
"Truly God loes those who fight in his cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure." (Quran : Saff, 1)

Indeed, the Quran is full of passages extolling the magnificent virtuea of Jehad and enthusing the Muslims with the spirit and the love of it. We will refer to tow of them here. In these verses it is proclaimed that those who are slain in the Jehad should not be deemed or spoken of as deed; on them is conferred a very special existence by God in which they rejoice, exulting in the choicest favours of their Lord.
And say not of those who are slain in the way of God, "They are deed", Nay, they are living, though ye perceive (them) not. (Quran : Baqara, 19)

Think not of those who slain in God's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord: they rejoice in the bounty provided by God. (Quran : Aal-i-Imran , 170)

Coming to the Tradition, Hazrat Anas (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) relates that it was once observed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, "To set out in God's way once in the morning and once in the evening, is more precious than the whole world and all that is contained in it."
It is reported by Abdul Rahman bin jubair Ansari (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "It will not be that a person whose feet are covered with dust in the path of God goes to Hell."

Abdullah bin Amr bin-Aas (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) narrated it from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, "To fall a martyr in the cause of God atones for everything except a debt."

Abu Huraira (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) relates that it was said by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that, "No one will want to be sent back to the world after he has found a place in the Paradise, even though all the worldly joys and riches may be his in that case, except he who has met his death in the path of God; such a man will want to be returned to the earth and killed in the cause of God ten times over because of the high honor and splendid ceremony with which he will be received in the Heaven on account of dying a martyr's death."

Abu Huraira (Razi Allah-o-Ta,ala) again relates that once after expressing his earnest desire to participate in each and every Jehad, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) remarked that, "By the Holy being in whose power lies my life, I wish that I was killed and God,s way and brought back to life and killed again and brought back to life once more and

this happened over and over again."

This last Tradition alone is sufficient to bring home the subline significance of the Jehad and the unique privilege of meeting one's death in the course of it. Be that as it may, togather with preaching, guidance and reformation, Jehad is a part of the Apostolic mission of service and assistence to the faith, and now, by virtue of its being the vicegerent of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), the entire Muslim Millat has permanently to bear the responsibility of discharging all these duties.

The ideal way for the Ummat to carry them out was what was witnessed for sometime after the death of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) during the period known as Khilafat-i-Rashida, . It was in the nature of collective arrangment by the Ummat for the purpose of identifying itself, as completely as it could, with the most excellent way of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), both in aims and means.

The question of the appointment of the Caliph; that arose at the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) death, was not, as some people erroneously believe, similar to that of the appointment of theHead of a State. The real issue before the Holy Companions was to determine who among them was the most competent person to carry on the multitudinous work of the preaching and propagation of the faith, Spiritual instruction, guidance, Jehad and the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had bequeathed to the Ummat as a part of his Divine mission of the redemption of mankind and the orga-
nizatin and management of the world and accordance with the will of God. We have it from the most authentic sources that a sentence in the sermon delivered on the occasion by Hazrat Abu Bakr (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) ran as follows : "Mohammad (Peace be upon him) is dead; it is now necessary to chose a person who can take upon himself the responsibilities of the faith."

This, in brief, was the crux of the problem that confronted the muslims at critical hour. They were faced with the task of chossing a person who was most suited to lead the Ummat, as the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) deputy and successor, in his footsteps a person under whose guidance the caravan of the Ummat night continue to march forward steadily on the road on which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had set it forth.

During the reign of the first four Caliphs specially that of the first two, Hazrat Abu Bakr (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) and Hazrat Omar (Razi Allah-o-Ta'ala) fullest attention was paid to these functions and they were attended to most admirably. But, afterwards, as the process of decay set in and the institution of the Caliphate got transformed, under the stress of imperialistic and other worldly ambitions, from the lieutenancy of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) to kingship, the Apostolic work also suffered a sever setback and receded from the mental horizons of the Caliphs we leave aside the exceptions here, The Ummat, on the whole, however, did remain alive, in a greater and lesser degree, to its duty during all the different phases of its history. It never ceased to send forth from its bosom determined and deep hearted men who did their bit to fulfil the great trust the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and charged it with, Jehad, by the very nature of its case,

was the look-out of the rulers; the common people could do nothing about it on thier own, nor they were for that reason bound by the Shariat to take the initiative in the matter. But where the other aspects of religious endeavour were concerned, aspects that could be taken care of privately, some activity or another was always kept up at the individual level to strengthen and promote them, and what little stock of faith and piety the Ummat can boast of today is but the fruit of the exertions of its inspired sons who come forward to give up themselve to these lofty purposes. All such men, what ever might have been the nature of their service preaching or guidance, writing or the giving of sermons belong, without a question, to the halved circle of the 'Friends of God', and have a share in the deputy ship and lieutenancy of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), although they might have never had a hand in the exercise of the power and the authority of the state.

Shah Waliullah has stated very plainly in Fuyuzul Harmain that people who strive with all sincerity and with no other motive than to propitiate the favour of God through such branches of the Apostolic work as religious and moral preaching, instruction, guidance and reformation are as such the Caliphs of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as those that engage themselves conscientiously and without any selfish considerations in the political and governmental section of it like Jehad and the establishment of peace, justice and equity. The only difference is that while the latter hold the 'outer' or the 'perceptible' part of the Caliphate, the former, the 'inner' or the 'transcendental' part of it the Shah having divided the office of the Caliphate into two parts, the 'outer' and the 'inner'.

The Caliphate, as a political and governmental institution ceased to exist a long time ago. The Muslim States of today and there are found quite a score of them largely, have nothing to do-with the aim and purpose of the prophet, and they also lay no pretensions to it. Some of them are, on the other hand, as thoroughly indifferent to the faith as any of the mon-Muslim States of the World. But the other half of the Prophet's duputy ship the missionary half of it which appertains to the spreading of his message outside the instrumentality of the government is still very much there: its doors are open and the scope for it is greater today then it ever was. Its possibilities in the modern age are unlimited. Let more and more servants of God make this auspicious field, of work their own, let moer and more of them step down in this glorious arena of selfless service, and devote themselves, according to their capacity and merit, to the task of popularizing the way of life the the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had brought into the world. To strive and to struggle in this path and to make sacrifices in it is the greatest Jehad of the modern times, the truest form of loyalty and sincerity to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his most genuine deputy ship. Those who will set their feet on it will see that other avenues will also be opened out to them by God. It was in circumstances not far different to what we are faced with today that the following words of assurance and good cheer were spoken to the Muslim of Mecca through the last verse of Sura-i-Ankaboot:

And those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to our paths; for verily, God is with those who do good

Government And Politics

Government and politics exercise a profound influence on the life of a people. It could, therefore, not be that God excluded a subject of this magnitude from the range of his guidance and gave men a free hand to conduct themselves as they pleased in the organization and control of their political and administrative needs.

As Islam has prescribed for our benefit a precisecode of behaviour in all other domains of our existence, in the sphere of government and politics, too, it has furnished us with full guidance and enjoined on us to pursue the correct and the godly course in affairs relating to it as well. It is as much our duty to abide by the constructions laid down by God and the Prophet (Peace be upon him) in respect of political matters as in matters of belief and worship, social intercourse and practical and monetary dealings, and the service and assistance of the Faith.

It was quite natural for communities that did not possess a complete program of individual and social existence like Islam which could show them the way, or, at least, march hand in hand with them in the highly advanced and complicated business of modern politics to draw a destinction between religion and the management of political affairs. They had no other choice open to them. But if the Muslims, too, are getting increasingly inclined towards that mode of thinking, it is not because they have honestly come to the conclusion, after examining the political teachings and principels of Islam in the light of the current needs and conditions, that the processes of government and politics now be ordered according to the guidance of God. The truth is that they could not being themselves to accept the restrictions imposed by Islam in the political field on the sefish pursuit of power and on yielding to the temptations of ease and comfort; they felt that they did not have the moral strength to live up to the Islamic ideals of selfless service and sacrifice; they took refuge behind the slogan that religion and politics were two separate things and devorced Islam from the science and art of the management of the affairs of the state. Otherwise, even today if the rulers of any of the Muslim States can have the spiritual courage to chose for themselves a life of piety and dedication, in the footsteps of Omar bin Abdul Aziz, (and God may also have blessed them with insight into the faith or they may be enjoying the confidence and support of men of religious vision and insight), they can prove to the world that the political structure inspired and regulated by the ideals of islam is still the best among all the political systems and ideologies and it is through it alone that the different problems plaguing the existing tmes, both at the national and the international levels, can be happily resolved.The greatest misfortune with Islam in the contemporary world is that its followers, more specially those that make the top layers of the society, are, on the whole, more faithful to their personal ambitions and sensual appetites than to the precepts of their faith.

We will restrict ourselves here, as in the previous chepters, only to an examination of the basic principles. For a wider study of the subject, the reader will have to turn to books written specifically on Islamic theocracy. The cornerstone of the political philosophy of Islam is the principle, or rather, the belief, that sovereignty belongs exclusively to God, the Lord Creator and the Cherisher of the universe, and all men, everywhere, are his

subjects.

"To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth." (Quran : Fath',2)

"To him belongs the dominion of the Heavens and the earth." (Quran : Hadid,1)

"For the earth is God's to give as the heritage to such of his servants as he Pleaseth." (Quran : Airaf, 15)

In Islamic Polity, the Head of the State is called the Caliph (meaning, successor, deputy representative), and the Govenment, the Caliphate and those are no empty terms. They derive their origin from the fact that in Islam that position of the ruler is nothing more than that of a superintendent or an administrator. He cannot rule according to his sweet will, but in compliance with the obligations placed upon him by God. He is compelled to function, as the successor of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and of his true successors and deputies of the former days, within the limits of the Divine law. He is not above reproach; he is answerable for his actions to fellow-men in this life, and to God in the Hereafter.
Furthermore, these terms help to remind us of the truth that the scope of governmental activity in Islam is not confind only to political and administrative matters. The real duty of an Islamic Government lies, as we have stated a few pages earlier, in the promotion of the work of human reform and guidance that was entrested by God to the Prophet (Peace be upon him). The more will a Caliph depart from the way of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), the more will he be considered to have failed in the discharge of the duties of his office.

The office of the Caliph is not a hereditary one, going down from father to son. The Caliph is chosen by the people; its procedure may, however, very with the changing pattern of time.

The Caliph does not act independently but through mutual discussion, consultation and advice. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself was required to seek the advice of his Companions in matter in respect of which no guidance was available to him in the form of a Divine revelation.

"And consult them in affairs (of moment)" (Quran : Aal-i-Imran, 17)

The Quran indicates as a characteristic feature of Islamic polity and the Muslim method of conducting business that the Muslims are the people.
"Who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation." (Quran : Shura, 4)

(In exceptional circumstances, however, if the Caliph honestly feels that he is in the right he can insist on his own judgement as against the advice by the popular assembly).
Power, in Islam, is desirable solely for the reason that it can be of great help in the establishment of God-worship and righteous living in the world. We have just seen how in sura-i-Haj it was said of the Companions while they were granted the permission to

take up aims against the pagan oppressors that:

"(They are) those (of our servants) who, if we establishment them in the land, will establish regular prayer and give regular charity and enjointhe right and forbid the wrong. With God rests the end (and decision) of (all affairs). (Quran : Haj, 6)

This verse, as one would say, constitutes the political manifesto of Islam. The Caliphat is expected to make it its foremost duty to take all possible steps for the furtherance of the aims enunciated in it. All its policies and activities should be addressed to these ends. Its edicational program must, for instance be pressed in the same direction; it should have a permanent ministry of moral and spiritual guidance and suprintendance: If the need arose it should have to hesitation in proclaiming Jehad with in the conditions prescribed for it. As an institution of Divine trusteeship, the Caliphate, further, is responsibile for providing all the citizens irrespective of their race or religion with the necessities of life and with peace and security of person, honor and property. It has to assure that no undue burden tax, duty, charge or obligation is imposed on any section of the people. Justice, under it, should be within the reach of everyone. It should be just and impartial and be administered without fear or favour. The Quran says:
God doth command you to be just.

And :
God do'h command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due: and when he judge between man and man that yeh judge with justice: verily, how excellent is the teaching which he giveth you. (Quran : Nissa, 8)
In the foregoing verse, a part from the dispensation of justice, fairly and impartially, it is also ordained that the trusts should be rendered back honestly and to whom they rightfully belong. In the Arabic language, specially in the usage of the Quran, the term "Trust" conveys a wide range of meaning. Here, in this verse, the command: "Render back your trusts to whom they are due". also implies that a charge or responsibility should be entrusted only to a person who is most worthy of it. It, thus, becomes a major obligation with an Islamic government that public offices are granted to alone who are deserving of them, also from the point of view of piety and righteousness.
Yet another Quranic proclamation on the subject of justice, fairness and equity reads:

"Oh ye who believe! stand out firmly for God, as witness to fair dealing. and let not the hatred of others you make you swerve to wrong and apart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety : and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all ye do." (Quran : Maida, 2)

It is related by Abu Saeed Khudri (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala) that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) once observed: "On the day of Reckoning, nearer to God and more cordially beloved of him will the just ruler, and, on that day, the most detested and the recipient of the severest chastisement will be the ruler who ruled with oppression and injustice.
Hazrat Omar bin Khattab (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala) has related from the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that :

"On the LAST Day the most eminent among men will be the just ruler (or officer) who was also kind and compassionate, and the worst among men on that day will be the ruler (or officer) who ruled with tyrany and injustice". It follows, therefore, that justice should also be sympathtically alive to the needs of the people and activity solicitous of their welfare.

Hazrat Anas (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala) reports that when the Prophet (Peace be upon him) appointed a Companion as a governor and sent him off to the place of this duty, he used to advise him to act as the harbinger of hope and good cheer to the people (arousing in them sentiments of courage and confidence) and refrain from things that may be hateful to them and cause public resentment, and to create comforts and facilities for them and refrain from putting up difficulties and impediments in their path.

It is, thus, a part of duty of the government to the people to see that its officers are not there to boss over them, flaunting masterful and over-gearing airs and making things harder for them. The officer should strive to strengthen the moral of the people and provide opportunities for their betterment and progress. The Purpose of the law is not to be an instrument of harassment of the people. It is instrument for the removal of hindrance to good life and the creation of conditions favorable to the peace and prosperity of the land. Thus, it is said of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the Quran that:

"He release them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them." (Quran : Airaf)

The real sources of legislation in Islam are God and the Prophet (Peace be upon him), or, in other words, the book and the Sunnah. The laws that have been permanently enumerated in them are absolute and cannot be repealed or amended. But there are various needs and situations arising of life concerning which no clear instructions are found in the Quran and the Sunnah. For these, fresh legislation has to be brought out from time to time, but here, too, the guidance principle will be the path shown by the twin sources of law-making indicated above and the practice of Khulafa-i-Rashideen togather with the considerations of public welfare.

Another prominent feature of Islamic theocracy is that solicitation for an office of the state is a positive disqualification. Abu Moosa Ashari relates that two of his relations had approached the Prophet (Peace be upon him) for some post in the government upon which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) exclaimed, "By God, we do not appoint a person to a public office who makes a request for it, or shows his longing for it in any other way, "

The officers are required to live simply. During the Caliphate of Hazrat Omar (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala), when an officer was appointed he was warned to shun luxury and ostentation or he would be dismissed. The exact words of the warning were: "Do not keep a Tarkish horse or eat fine bread or wear and expensive dress made of delicately woven fabric or shut your doors on the petitioners; should you indulge in any of these, you will have to bear the penalty." Austerity for the government officers was. thus, not a

matter of persuasion or moral exhortation in the days of that renowned Caliph but a part of their service regulations.

The cardinal responsibility for putting in the practice the doctrines of Islamic polity rests naturally with Muslims who are in power in countries in which they live. So far a Muslims living in non-Muslim countries are concerned, they can only make a sincere and well-meaning effort, within the limits of practicability, of course, to persuade the ruling community or communities there to incorporate as many teachings of Islam as possibile in their political systems.

The first step in the revival of Islamic theocratic structure in the so-called Muslim States will have to be a religious reorientation of the lives of their Muslim inhabitants. By this we mean the Subordination of worldly interests to the interests of the life hereafter in order that it may become easy for them to forego material pleasures for the higher ideal of winning the approbation of God. There can simply be no other way. History underlines this truth and the innate spirit of Islam also demands it. Unless a religious reawakening is worked up among the Muslims the elevation of Muslim countries into genuine Islamic political societies will remain, at leas t in our present age, an empty dream. This is a hard and painstaking process, but there is no help to it. There is no alternative route, no short-cut to an Islamic government. And, even if, by a stroke of good lick. The Islamic system came in to being somewhere, it would be impossibile for it to function successfully unless the intellectual and emotional mechanism of the Muslims living under it and their practical behaviour were dominated by considerations of high piety and moral rectitude. It would be torn into shreds by the Muslims themselves.

So much for Muslims living in their own independent countries. Now we will address ourselves to the problem of Muslims who belong to countries where they are in a minority, as in India and China. Since the conditions in these very greatly from one to the other a single code of conduct cannot possibly be evolved in the light of Islamic teachings for the political guidance of their Muslim citizens. We can only enumerate the board principles that can be taken recourse to the circumstances permit or require.

(1) A time was that when the truth of Moses was revealed to the prestidigitators of Egypt and they bowed in obedience to the Divine faith and entered into its fold, the pharaoh felt so greatly outreged that he immediately pronounced a most brutal death on all of them. The tyrant did not spare even his wife the consequences of his wrath.

In the same way, the pagans of Mecca practiced such ghastly atrocities on the poor, weak people who were the first to respond to the call of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and embrace Islam that a recounting of them can even today make the eyes of the most stout-hearted among us well up with moisture.

That age of savage cruelty and bestial oppress on is now perhaps, a thing of the past, It is not likely to return before the appearance of the imposter, Dajjal. But, should the situation in any country become, by any chance, so flagrantly unbearable for Muslims, it

will be open to them to migrate to another land, even though it be a non-Muslim one, where they can live peace-
fully as Muslims, as their co-religionists had done by moving away to Abyssinia at the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) advice, or, if it be not possible, to tread the path of the martyrs and lay down their lives gallantly in the cause of Allah every drop of their blood will Insha Allah lend new life and vitality to the faith and be the cause of its resurgence in that very land and for those to whom this too should not be possibile due to want of sufficient courage, there is the permission to concern their faith and continue to live in that country, hoping for a happier turn of events and making humble entreaties to God.

"Our Lord; rescue, us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from these one who will protect, one who will help." (Quran : Nissa, 10)

(2) To the best of our knowledge, a situation as grievously dismal as that does not obtain anywhere in the world today. There are, nevertheless, states which aspire not through the crude methods of old but through newer and more subtle ways to the Muslims away from Islam (or, rather, all God-abiding peoples from their spiritual moorings) without placing a legal ban on religion or God-worship.
The Muslim citizens of these states should resolve to make undivided allegiance to God and the Holy faith and constancy of purpose and patient perseverance the spearheads of their policy and do whatever lies in their power to keep the spirit of Islam warm in their homes by imparting to them an aver-all atmosphere of religiousness. They should leave nothing undone on their part to arrange for the religious instruction and training of their rising generations. (It is our considered opinion that all this can be done if the right and the will to do it be there). Judicious and well-meant steps may also be taken. As far as they are possible, to make the powers that be realise the folly of their ways. these steps can be of a political as well as a non-political nature and they can produce results beyond all expectations. The might of the Lord is supreme: His way are beyond our understanding, and it is an unchanging habit of his and a firm, definite promise that he will make his aid available to those of the faithful who will remain steadfast in his cause dating times of trial and suffering, and instead of giving way to despair, persevere in their efforts as they can in the circumstances. Situations will arise and factors will emerge, as if from nowhere, that will alter the course of things and remove the difficulties in their path.

With most of the non-Muslim countries the position is that they are not antagonistic to Islam or harbor a fundamental prejudice against God or religion. Their Muslim inhabitants enjoy full freedom of religious belief and practice under the constitution along with the other communities. But since the ideological climate and the sociopolitical structure there are un-Islamic and wholly materialistic, some of their laws come into conflict with the tenets of Islam, or it becomes very difficult to fashion one's life according to the teachings of Islam in their presence. In some of these countries the population of Muslims runs into several crores. Take our own homeland, India, the Muslim population lies between four to five crores. These Muslims, naturally, have got to live in the countries of their birth. The question of migration does not at all arise for them as no Muslim country can afford to accommodate so many people within its

frontiers. In these circumstances, it is absurd to suppose that they can live permanently in isolation from the governments of their lands nor does the Shariat require them to adopt such an impossibile and unnatural course. At the same time, it is impossibile for them to participate freely in the government and politics of their countries like any other community, telling themselves that religion had nothing to do with politics and that they could render to God the things that are God's and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and still remain good Muslims. that would entirely be opend to the purpose and meaning of Islam. It would mean that althought God was the Lord and sovereign of the universe, government and politics did not fall within his jurisdiction,

Such being the case, what the Muslims of these countries can and should do is to chalk out a positive program of action for themselves with reference to their particular needs and conditions. This program must, however, be inspired by a twofold conviction: firstly that they have to stay Muslims first and last, unflinching in their loyalty to the commands of Godand the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as far as the circumstances allow and valuing that loyalty above everything else; and, secondly, that they have to confirm to the best standards of citizenship and render unstinted allegiance to their homelands. But it can be achived only when the Muslims are absolutely clear and their minds on these two points and it is their collective decision. To produce the requisite collective consciousness, it may be necessary for them to launch an educative campaign among themselves so that once the decision is taken it may hold good for the entire community functioning as a unit.

Another matter of crucial importance to the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim states is that, togather with their coreligionists in all other parts of the world, it is a question of faith for them too to believe in Islam as the Ideal program of life, both individual and collective. As against it, all other programs are false and worthless. In consequence of this convction, as from the humanitarian point of view also, It should be their sincerest desire to see that the other communities also adopted it as their own. and the Holy law, as revealed by God in his infinite Mercy, reigned supreme all over the world. But, with all this, that cannot manage to ignore the realities of the situation as prevailing in their countries. They will have to determine their attitude after giving the most careful thought to all the aspects of the problem and with this dictum of the Shariat as their guiding principle: "Wherein lies most of good and least of evil. " In the light of this dictum they can also decide whatever to offer loyal support and co-operation to the governments of their lands in a particular situation or not.

Aliving faith in God and a life wedded to the ideals of virtue and service to mankind are equally necessary for all Muslims irrespective of the lands to which they belong. The real reward for these high moral and spiritual qualities lies in the Hereafter, but for Muslims living in non-Muslim countries they are of the greatest advantage in this world as well. They are the safest surest and the most universally effective means for the covercoming of their difficulties and for ensuring for them a place of honor in society. It is absolutely imperative for them to strive to their utmost to cultivate these qualities and to propagate them in the circle in which they move. If they can bring themselves to it, they will see that sccess beyond their fondest dreams will kiss their feet. God has held

out a promise to this effect at various places in the Quran, as in this verse:

"Those who believe and (constantly) guard against evil; for them are glad tidings in the present and in the Hereafter : No change can their be in the Words of God. This is indeed the Supreme Felicity." (Quran : Yunus, 7)
Muslims, who in the modern world, are feeling despondent and frustrated at their lot of being placed in the positionof a weak minority in the countries of their birth have for them a special message of courage and hope in Sura-i-Yusuf in the Quran.
The story of Hazrat Yousuf (Alai-hi-Salam) teaches us the moral that however weak be the numerical or political position of Muslims in a country they may even be in the minority of one and isolated completely from the rest of the people, religiously as well as racially, if they are true in their faith and righteous in their habits and are also ready to render whatever service they can to fellow citizens and to the State, they are bound to carve out a position of honor and trust for themselves and win the respect and admiration of its inhabitants for their religion. On being questioned by his brothers how a person whom they had pushed into the well could come to rise to such great heights, Hazrat Yusuf (Alai-hi-Salam) offers this explanation:

"Behold, he that is righteous and patient, never will God suffer the reward to be lost, of those who do good. (Quran : Yusuf, 10)

So, this is the unfailing Law of God never to suffer the reward of one who believes and does good to be last and that we have said in the preceding paragraph was only an elucidation of this truth. It may not be very easy be convinced logically of its effectiveness in the political field, yet it should also not prove so very difficult, specially in the modern world of democracy and liberalism. But, alas, the aspectacle that Muslims are presenting is that while they are eager to take recourse to all sorts of agitational methods for the solution of their political difficulties methods which are totally the product of the materialistic frame of mind and from which no good has ever accrued or can ever accrue, they are not prepared to give a trial to the remedy prescribed by the Quran. Indeed, it would seem that their state of mind today was identical to that of the unenlightened group among the Israelites of old as portrayed in the Quran in these words:
"And if they see the way of the right conduct, they will not accept it as the Way; but if they see the way of error, that is the Way they will adopted." (Quran:Airaf,17)

Muslim minorities in non-Muslim lands can also draw a most valuable lesson from the episode of Hudaibiyah in the life of the holy Prophet. The treaty of Hudaibiyah had apparently been contracted by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) on such weak and humiliating terms that it had become impossibile even for a Companion of the unbounded devotion and loyalty of Hazrat Omar (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala) to suppress his disappointment and resentment against it. But the point is, why had the Prophet (Peace be upon him) agreed to a humiliating arrangement like that? It was because the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had wanted channels to contact of be established between the Muslims and the people of Mecca who were then in the fore-front of the compaign of war and hatred against Islam so that the Meccan polytheists could get an opportunity to

observe the Muslims and their their religion at close qurters and to ponder, in a peaceful atmosphere, over the all-important question of faith he had posed before them. History records that it was this very treaty, shameful and degrading as it looked at first sigt, that paved the way for the Meccans to embrace Islam. It was as a consequence of it that out standing leaders of the Quraish of the caliber Khalid bin Valeed and Amr bin el-Aas (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala), entered into the foldof the Divine faith the biographers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the early historians of Islam are agreed that far more persons accepted the Faith of their own choice and voilation within a few years of the singing of the Treaty than during the whole of the preceding 19 or 20 years of the minstry of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). That is why, the Quran has spoken of it as a "Manifest Victory."
"Verily, We have granted thee a manifest Victory."

The unique advantage to which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had turned the seemingly hopeless treaty of Hudaibiyah is today within the reach of the Muslims populations of most of the non-Muslim countries. But the Muslims themselves are so utterly laking in that life of faith, Islamic morality and devotion to mankind, and that unselfish religious enthusiasm and solicitude for the Hereafter without which they can have no complaint if they fell forlorn and abandoned. If they want to seek an answer to their ills and problems in Islam and the Quran, it is this: "Become Muslims : produce in yourselves the fire of conviction and adopt a life or faith and virtue and an earnest love for humanity and paths will be opened up for you that you cannot conceive of."
Besides this fundamental principle, a passing reference may also be made to certain question of detail. as we have said before, it is essential for Muslim minorities everywhere to get it into their heads, clearly and once for all, that they have to live and die in the lands of their birth, and, at the same time, stay true to their faith. This is a matter about which a government, in spite of its being a non-Muslim one, can be most sensible and co-operative if it just and liberal, but if it is otherwise, it can also put all sorts of impediments. Should it, therefore, be possible for Muslims to be helpful in bringing more enlightened and broadminded sections of the possibilities that may be open to them. In a democratic set-up, at the time of elections, for instence, there should be nothing to prevent them from offering support to a political party that may be expected to safeguard their religious and other interests more justly and fruitfully than the other contesting parties. They can also participate in the government of it is felt that they can server their interests better that way.

This is the verdict of common sense as well as that of the Shariat. In our support we can cite an instance from the conduct of the Holy Companions who had migrated to Abyssinia at the time of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). During the period of the stay of the Companions in the country, Abyssinia was attacked by a foreign invader, and the Companions prayed more earnestly to God for the victory of the Negus. Their leader, Zubair (Razi Allah-o-Ta'Ala) is also reported to have performed some highly meritorious service for the emperor on the battlefield. explaining their conduct, one of the immigrant Companions, Umm-i-Salama, has stated that it was because they felt that if the enemy won he would not treat them as generously as the Negus had been doing.

Finally, Muslim personal law is a part of the religious structure of Islam and no non-Muslim government has the right to interfere with it. Muslims living under non-Muslim system are, as such, required to make every possible effort for the recognition of this principle by their governments. They may also take steps to setup, under the aegis of the Shariat, a separate arrangement of their own for the management of such problems of their individual and social concern as cannot otherwise be taken care of adequately in a non-Muslim State.

Before concluding, we would like to repeat that the Muslims falling in the category of a minority in a country should keep before them for their guidance the Story of Hazrat Yusuf (Alai-hi-Salam) which has been narrated in the Quran in proper detail. There is not an iota of doubt that Muslims cannot fail to secure a position of honor and trust for themselves and their religion my country they live in provided that they possess real faith, and lead a clean life a life illumined with God-consciousness and show proper discretion and prove their usefulness to their countrymen and the State. This is the way of God, and " No change can there be in the way of God."

Islamic Mysticisim

A very special branch of the Faith, through which it is carried to perfection, is Ehsan, as the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) Tradition describe it, or Tasawwuf, as it is known in common parlance. In plain words, It means the creation of a real, living consciousness of God a consciousness so strong and vivid as if one had actually seen him, sweeping aside every trace of doubt and uncertainty. When this consciousness becomes complete, it forges a bond of loyalty with God that fills the heart with his remembrance, his love and an intense awareness of his night ; it becomes the essence, the ruling spirit, of one's existence, of all one's thought and action, in prayer, in morality, in social behaviour, in monetary dealings, and, so forth. All that one does then is inspired, governed and regulated by this all embracing faith and overpowering realization. One's external life gets completely pervaded by this internal feeling.

Ehsan or Tasawwuf, thus, represents the very pinnacle of faith. It is the supreme standard of one's spiritual state. One is perfect in his faith. or not according to the measure with which he is blessed with this wealth. The famous Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) consisting of the dialogue between him and angel, Gabriel, is a pointer in this direction. The manner in which the term Ehsan occurs in it after Imam and Islam testifies to the truth of the assertion that Ehsan marks the ultimate stage in the evolution of faith.

Briefly, the Tradition says that one day the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was sitting with some of the Companions that Gabriel came in disguised as a traveler from a far-off place. He took his seat close to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and began to ask him some questions. The first was, "What is Islam (Faith)?" And, the second, "What is Islam?. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) gave suitable replies to his questions. Then he asked, "What is Ehsan" The Prophet (Peace be upon him) answered, "Ehsan means to worship God as if one is actually seeing him or is being seen by him."(In other words, the stage of Ehsan is reached when the awareness of God becomes the greatest reality of

one's life and one's every act is performed under a constant sense of his presence for although man cannot see God it is just not possible in this material world God does see him all the time).

This state of sublimity can exist only when faith has worked itself out to the highest degree and become one's life-breath. It was for the attainment of this state that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) would beg fervently to God. "O God! he would say, "Let such be my state that I may fear Thee and revere Thee as if I was seeing Thee constantly till (at last) my time came and I went up to join Thee."

This condition is known among the sufis(Muslim mystics) as Huzoori (presence) and Yad-Dasht (remembrance) and Nisbat (affinity), and when anyone is described by them as Saheb-i-Nisbat, it denotes that he has arrived at it in a considerable way. When this state of spiritulity is reached, a person gets permanently attuned to God and becomes immune to all kinds of doubts and misgivings concerning his being. Setting forth his own experience in one of his letters, Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-Sani says: "Acting on the postulate: 'Acknowledge publicity the boons conferred by God,'a Dervish of his (Naqshbandi) school narrates about himself that all doubts and fears have totally disappeared from his heart, so much so that even if he lives for a thousand years like the (Hebrew). Prophet, Nooh (Alai-hi-Salam), not a single doubp or temptation can creep into it may, it cannot creep into it even if he himself strives for it for many a long year".

As a natural outcome of this all-pervading effulgence of faith, this all-engulfing sense of Divine presence, all other ties and attachments are merged and lose their identity in the one great allegiance to Almighty, and all internal and external acts, such as, love, friendship, enmity and social and business intercourse begin to be gone through and carried out for his sake alone. A Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) on the subject of Ehsan tells that " A person whose state may be that when he loves, he loves for the sake of God and when he hates, he hates for the sake of God, and when he gives, he gives for the sake of God and when he withholds his hand from giving, he withholds it for the sake of God he has attained perfection in his faith.

The most exalted position in this respect was that of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). He operated on the highest level to which a man can evolve his destiny from the point of view of faith and Ehsan. In his life there was contained the most ideal blending of knowledge and awareness, and piety and the fear of God. He used often to say of himself, "No one among you fears God more than me, no none reverse him more intensely than me, and no one possesses a greater knowledge and a more complete awareness of him than me."

From the Prophet (Peace be upon him) his Companions had received their share aptitude and circumstances, and the possess-
ion of this very commodity has remained throughout the high merit of the sufi-saints of Islam. All their special spiritual exertions remembrance, meditation and acts of self-purgation have had no other aim than the acquirement of it. As Hazrat Gangohi, a Sufi-saint of the Current century, writes, "This is the ultimate goal of all systems (of

Sfism)......... Why had the holy Companions sacrificed all that they had life, family, property and everything? What had they seen? It was simply because of the fact that they had acquired absolute faith in God through their association with the Prophet (Peace be upon him). This was, with them, the measure of all things. How did Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Moinuddin Chishti and Bahauddin Bukhari climb to greatness? Through this very faith". A few lines later, the great Sufi goes on to observe: " This forging of link (with God) is called Ehsan. The raising up of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was for its sake alone and all the Holy Companions were endowed with it in different degrees. The saints of the Ummat than produced it through another way."

The real thing, therefore, is the acquirement of the light of faith and the inner feeling of Ehsan. The holy Companions had realized this state through the fullness of their love for and devotion to the Prophet (Peace be upon him), through the intimateness of their association with him, and through dedicating themselves to life of virtue under his advice and direction, and the making of utmost sacrifices in the case of God. After the death of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), the Companions, both individually and as a body, functioned as his successors and representatives in the line, and as long as they remained in the world the exalted state of Ehsan could be gained by sitting at their feet.

When the Companions, too, were gone and symptoms of moral and spiritual degradation began to make themselves manifest in the Muslim society with the laps of time, a stage came when the high should men in the Ummat, who still cherished in their hearts the heritage of Ehsan and occupied the same elevated position in their branch as the Mujahids in Figh, stirred themselves into activity. Seeing that the inspiring society of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the Companions was available no more and the Muslim Millet was moving down steadily from the ideal of righteous-doing to corruption, they evolved certain methods for the kindling of the flame of faith in the hearts and the generation of that feeling of God realisation which is the essence of Ehsan. These methodes included excessive remembrance of God, meditation, and the control and discipline of the desires and impulses of the self. Their utility is selfevident and their is a clear proof also of their correctness and effectiveness in the original sanctions of the Faith and Shariat. The bulk of the Ummat has consistently reposed its trust in the soundneee of these methods and in the integrity of the holy men who had worked them out, and they have, further, received the greatest of sanctions the sanction of time. These last two factors, more than anything else, place the worth and merit of the practices indicated above beyond therealm of controversy.

For a thousand years and more, the finest elements in the community, from the point of view of faith, have affirmed that the system in vogue among the Sufis for spiritual self-evolution and the creation and strengthening of God-consciousness is fundamentally correct and efficacious in practice. Who can deny that hundreds and thousands of men have derived an immense benefit as a result of their spiritual association with each of the leading Sufi-saints like Khwaja Maroof Karkhi, Bishar Hafi. Siri Saqati, Shafiq Balakhi, Bayazeed Bustami, Junaid Baghdadi, Abu Bakr Shibi, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Sheikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, Sheikh Amed Rifai, Sheikh Abul Hasan Shazli, Khwaja Osman Harooni, Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, and Khawaja Bahauddin

Naqshband, and the saints of the last three centuries of the present Millennium of the class of Khwaja Baqi Billah, Imam Rabbani, Mujaddid Alf-Sani Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi and their deputies, and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi and syed Ahmed Shaheed, and countless of other devoted men of God, who like them, were adorned with the virtue of Ehsan and functioned as the leaders of this feild during their time? Anyone who possesses the briefest acquaintance with these luminous links in the chain of Sufistic achievement will agree that what they had attained had come to them through no other channel. How, then, can it be possible to doubt the soundness and efficacy of a system that has produced such exuisite specimens of religious perfection, so many splendid men of faith and conviction, who may justly be described as the spiritual blossom and glory of Islam?

Of course, some sections of the Ummat have been guilty of error and folly in varying measures and both of a conceptual and a practical nature in the feild of Tasawwuf, as in the other fields of the Faith. But just as the process of the caution and correction has been kept in operation steadily in the other fields through the Ulema and the Mujahids, in this field, too, it has been the same way with Sufis of deep learning and penetrating vision coming up from time to time from God to straighten its curves and to remove its impurities. Furthermore, it does not become any one to reject a whole structure of belief and practice simply because some sections of its followers have some mistakes.

such in brief, is the meaning of Ehsan and the place it holds in Islam. The path by which it is reached is known popularly as Sulook or Tareeq. It is an accepted fact that to undertake a journey along this path one must place oneself in the hands of an expert guide who can show the way and furnish lead at each step in the correct direction. One cannot start treating oneself (or others) for physical ailments by reading books of medicine. The same is true of the feild of spiritual well-being. For spiritual treatment it is necessary to go to spiritual physician, i.e., to a man who has attained the goal by going all the way himself and knows all its ups and downs, and follow his directions faithfully. The first duty of the pilgrim should, therefore. be to seek out a guide and a leader who in addition to his religious and spiritual accomplishments. must also be suited to his natural disposition and to commit himself to his charge ungrudgingly. This is called Iradat.

Tragically true, as it is, that such accomplished men of God are becoming scarce day by day, the world is not quite empty of them. There do exist men about whom it can be said, subject to the limitations of human judgement and understanding, of course, that to their lot has fallen the heritage of God-consciousness which is the goal and destination of Ehsan and under their guidance and with requisite enthusiasm and perseverance one can successfully traverse the path of Sulook.

It is, surely, not that any one who flourishes himself as a peer is worthy of being taken as a guide and a mentor. The world knows that there are both fake and genuine among religious teachers and spiritual masters, as among political leaders and physicians, and so forth. We admit that the proportion of imposters in the religious, and so forth. We admit that the proportion of imposters in the religious and spiritual sphere is far greater than elsewhere. But, as elsewhere, the true can be distinguished from the false here as well without much difficulty. The experts who are blessed also with a keen

understanding of the Shariat, like Shah Waliullah and Kazi Sanaullah of recent times, have laid down in the light of the Quran and Sunnah and their own knowledge and experience, certain suggestions for recognizing men with an awakened heart and an evolved soul who can be looked up to for spiritual guidance. the elementary test is that besides piety and a strict observance of the Shariat their state should be such that in their company people may be remineded of God. The hold of material aspirations may weaken, and the love of God, and the solicitude for the Hereafter may grow stronger as a result of associating with them, and these qualities may also be clearly manifest in their adherents and disciples.

The seek after Ehsan should, therefore, provide himself first of all with a guide of the above calibre, and if he cannot do so on his own, he may take the advice of those who are expected to be helpful in the making of the choice. If after listening to their advice he finds himself drawn to a saint and this feeling increases further when he comes to know him personally, he ought to turn towards him with faith and confidence, seek guidance from him and carry out his instructions loyally as a wise patient does the instructions of his physician. In such a case there will arise no occasion for disappointment and God will surely reward him in some degree or another with the radiance of faith and the feeling of Ehsan by means of which one's religious state is brought to perfection, faith in the unseen becomes as clear and firm as faith in the visible phenomena, and obtaining full riddance from all manner of spiritual doubts and misgivings, one's existence truly becomes a saga of undivided love and devotion to God.

But, the path of Tasawwuf is a hard path. One who treads it has to pay dearly in terms of suffering and sacrifice. Only a devotee who can make it the sole object and mission of his life and is ready to forgo his desires, his comfort and even his life for the sake of it can hope to do it successfully. No wonder, therefore, that the travelers along this path have always been few.

There is however, a lesser grade of Ehsan which lies in the endeavour that on conjunction with loyalty to the fundamental articles of faith, one's worship and remembrance of God may attain a standard so no impart a real heavenly joy to the heart, the moral and practical spheres of one's life may become reasonably clean at the least, and repugmamce to evil and the longing for good deeds may come to one almost habitually. They yearning for these ends is present in a fair amount in our religious circles and most of the devotees now a days go to spiritual masters with the promotion of these ideals as their object.

The present writer is not at all competent to tender advice towards the realisation of the higher ideal embodying the true concept of Ehsan. For that one will have to go to an enlightened teacher, and a real saint. There, however, seems no harmand taking the liberty here of advancing some suggestions regarding the lesser grade of that spiritual state, specially when they do not contain anything apart from what he has learnt from the masters and are representative solely of the general principles of the Divine faith and the holy law. The writer is further persuaded by the hope that should the reader be encouraged to put the suggestions to his advantage by acting on them, he will become

entitled to as much share in the Divine reward as the latter for it is a merciful law with the providence that " A person who guides another to virtue will be recompensed equally with him". It is in this hope and in this spirit alone that the following suggestions being offered.

(1) The most important thing is the soundness and integrity of faith. If there is a defect in the basic structure of a person's faith, for example, if there is a trace of polytheism in his spiritual outlook, all his endeavors will come to nothing. Even if he fasted during the day devoted his nights to prayer throughout the year, it would avail him nothing. Hence, the initial condition is doctrinal purity and wholesomeness. What has been said in this connection in the preceding chapters of the book should be enough by way of general guidance.

(2) Care should be taken to learn the teachings and postulates of the religion, whether they appertain to matters like Namaz and Roza, which are obligatory for every one, or to the general conduct of life. The course that may be best suited to one's peculiar needs and circumstances should be adopted for this purpose.

(3) It is necessary to offer earnest repentance for sins of omission and commission committed in the way of God and for the life spent thus far in neglect and folly. It should also be resolved with all one's heart and the strength of will to carry out in future the Divine Commands scrupulously and lead a life of loyalty and devotion to God.

It should be remembered that God demands of his servants only what lies within them to do, and that, too, without involving themselves in any great difficulty. He never calls upon man to do a thing that may be beyond his capacity or endurance. There is, in fact, so much regard for convenience in religion that if it may be hard for a person to stand up for prayer due to illness, he is permited to offer it up in the sitting posture or even while lying in bed. In the same way, he is allowed to forego the fasts Ramzan if he be ill or in a journey. The same is the case with the other duties of religion also.........It is, as such, totally wrong to suppose that to live upto the requirements of the faith is a highly taxing business. This belief is due wholly to lack of will and absence of habit. If a person makes up his mind and lets the observance of religious postulates sink into himself as a settled tendency, he will soon see that there will be no peace for him otherwise.

(4) Mere mortals that we are, we are a prey to numerous weaknesses. There is the Devil, always on the look out to lure us into sin, and there is our own sensual self. It is, therefore not inconceivable that in spite of our sincere desire to observe the Divine ordinances and refrain from civil deeds, we may fail into error in a situation like this our attitude should be to seek the forgiveness of God as soon as we become morally aware of the infringement and resolve not to be guilty of it again Repentance at the commission of a sin. Provided that it is genuine, not only erases its efects altogather but also wins for one the love and pleasure of God. As the Quran says. "God loves those who seek forgiveness after committing a sin."

If the infringement be of a nature as to involve a sin against man also, like cruelty;

injustice, back-biting. violation of or encroachment upon the rights of others it will be necessary to make appropriate amends to the aggrieved for the misdeed in addition to seeking the forgiveness of God. We have already referred in the chapter on Monetary dealings and social conduct, to the Prophet's (Peace be upon him) Tradition that on the last day there will be people with a huge stock of Namaz, Roza, Zakat, and Haj to their credit, but, side by side with it, they will also be carrying heavy load of wrongs perpetrated on their fellowmen. The good acts of such people will then be allotted to those against whom they had transgressed, and, if the claims of the latter will still remain unsatisfied, the transgressors will be thrown into the Hell, all their praying and worshipping notwithstanding.

(5) The significance good morals command in faith and the crucial role they play in the spiritual evolution of man have been amply discussed in a previous chepter It should be a primary concern with all the votaries of God and religion to adorn themselves with the best of morals. But since moral behaviour is closely related to one's innat disposition and personality, its cleansing and reformation is more difficult than that of the other sphers of our activity. As a general rule, one is to exert oneself to the utmost and assume deliberately even though one might not be actually in possession of them the moral virtues, such as, humility, mildness, affability, love, compassion, patience, contentment, generosity, selfnegation and sicerity and good will towards others, and avoide the opposite qualities like vanity, passion, stinginess, greed, jealousy, rejoicing at the misfortunes of others, and selfishness. Insha Allah, in due course. one's personality will get cast into the new mould. A Tradition of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) assures that, "He who will assume chastity an effort. God will make him contented; he who will assume forbearance with an effort. God will make him forbearing." It is said that once a Companion complained to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) of his own hard-heartedness upon which the Prophet (Peace be upon him) advised him to make a habit of stroking gently the heads of the orphans. It was a remedial measure of identical style. Other moral healers have also attested to the efficacy of this method.

(6) Care should be taken to observe the prescribed modes of worship, specially the Namaz, in as ideal a way as possible, and also to keep up the Nafl Prayers. Among the supererogatory prayers the Tahajjud is the most valuable. Worship, whether it takes the physical or the financial form or be it a mixed one and whether it is compulsory or super erogatory, is definitely the greatest source of spiritual progress and access to God.

(7) The next thing is to make the recitation of the Quran and Zikr a part of one's daily routine.

It is suggested that the confession, Subhan Allah wa Alhamd-o-Lillah wa La-Ilah-a-Ilallah wa Allah-o-Akbar, and the Istighfar and Durood Shareef be recited a hundred times each, morning and evening. During the recitation, attention should be focussed on the meanings of the words and phrases occurring in them, and the heart should also be made to participate in the task. It should also be confidently hoped during the act that, a part from the Divine recompense and reward that would accrue from the deed, one's soul might as well permeated with the radiance of God's name as a result of the

auspiciousness of the phrases recited.

Moreover, what is popularly known as Tasbeeh-i-Fatima (Subhan Allah, 33 times; Al-Hamd-o-Lillah, 33 times; Allah-o-Akbar, 34 times) may be recited, as for as possible, regularly after each Namaz. It does not take more than two minutes, and with a little care, every one can it. On retiring to bed for the night the above Tasbeeh may be said out once again, and three times the Kalima-i-Istighfar,viz., Astaghfirullah-il-Lazi La-Ilaha-Illa Hual Hayul Qaiyum wa Atoob-o-Ilaih.

Asuitable time may be fixed for the daily recitation of the Quran. The length of the recitation is not important; it may only be a section or two. What really matters is the regularity and the correctness of the recitation and the feelings of earnestness and reverence with it is done.

The aspirants are further advised to cultivate the habit of bringing the name of God on their tongues, in one from or another, at brief intervals during their hours of occupation, as for instance, by uttering Ya Allah, La Ilah-a-Illallah, or the full Kalima or Istighfar every little while. After the period of conscious finding a place in the select circle of those who have been spoken of in the Quran in these words: Men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the remembrance of God. (Nur , 5)

(8) After the Isha prayers in the night or at any other convenient hour, four or five minutes may be reserved for what among the Sufis is called 'meditation of death' . During these moments, a person should contemplate on what will occur to him when death will strike him down, which is an absolute certainly ; then what will his condition be when he will be buried in the grave after the necessary rituals of bathing and shrouding have been gone through and the funeral service has been said; what will he do in that dark, lonely call of the grave? How is he to pass the long period of suspense and agony intervening between his death and the day of final judgement if he does not prove worthy of Divine favour and forgiveness? And, finally, on the Last Day, what will his state be when the balance sheet of his conduct on the earth will be presented to God and He will pass His judgement? (These events should be visualized mentally as if one was actually going through them at the time.) Afterwards, he should pray to God with urgent solicitation for forgiveness, for death in a state of faith, and mercy in the life beyond.

(9) In worship, in Zikr and in all other acts of virtue, the eye should be solely on Divine approbation and recompense, in the earning of which full trust should be reposed. This, in religious terminology, is called, Iman-o-Ehtisab (i.e.Faith and Censorship). Two Rakats of Namaz offered up in this spirit are more precious than a hundred without it. With this as the permanent attitude of the mind, even the minutest trifles of life, like eating and drinking and the carrying out of the every day social and family obligations, get elevated to an act of prayer.

(10) The making of sulemn entreaties to God for one's spiritual as well as legitimate woldly needs and aspirations is not only an effective means to their realization, but also a high act of worship by itself. A Tradition reads "Dua is the essence and marrow of

worship. And another says." Upon whom the doors of Dua have opened. upon him the doors of mercy have opened. A votary should make it a point to supplicate to God with special care and ardency after each Namaz and at other suitable times believing in it to be a most efficacious means of earning Divine pleasure and gaining access unto him. Among the innumerable bounties conferred upon the Prophet (Peace be upon him) by God, a most exclusive was the endowment of his prayers with unique depth and fevor. Hundreds of his prayers are preserved in the books of Traditions and they are imbued with an extraordinary effulgence and auspiciousness . These Prayers have been assembled togather by the scholars to make a separate volume. The volumes compiled by Mulla Ali Qari, called Al-Hizbul Azam, and Hazrat Thanvi,under the title of Maqbool, have the special advantage of containing the Urdu Translation of the prayers and can be obtained casily. Both of them have been divided into seven sections to provide one section for each day of the week. A section from one of these volumes may be read every day.

These ten suggestions will. Insha Allah, suffice for the seekers of religious and spiritual correction and reform, subject, of course, to the condition that they are acted upon diligently and honestly. But there are people who are temperamentally incapable of being profited by the mere reading of a book. For them the advice, again, is to give themselves the benefit of the company of a living guide.

Two Prayers Of The Prophet (Peace be upon him)

Towards the close of the last chapter had made a mention of the Prayers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). We are now reproducing two of them here as it seems to be the fittest way of bringing the book to an end.

(1)

O Lord ! Thou heareth want I say and seeth wherever I am and in whatever state. Thou knowest what is secret and what is manifest in me, and naught concerning me in concealed from thee. I am in distress. a beggar. I beg Theeprotection and succor. thy fear is gripping me. I confess my sins; I entreat thee like a poor helpless suppliant; I beseech Thee liked a wretched sinner; I implore Thee like an efflicted, awe-struck slave a slave whose head may be bowed before Thee, whose tears may be flowing in thy presence, and whose body may be bent (in utter submission) ; a slave who may be lying prostrage on the ground begging and imploring, and crying his heart out. O Lord ! do not reject my prayer; have mercy on me. O Thou, the best and the Most excellent of Givers and Noblest of Helpers.

(2)

O Lord ! In the name of Thy being the knower of the hidden and in the name of the power Thou wieldeth over all that exists. (I beseech Thee) to keep me alive till life may be advantage to me in Thy knowledge and to let me be dead when death may be of advantage to me in Thy knowledge. I beg of Thee the strength to speak the truth when pleased and when angry and I beg of Thee happiness that may be permanent and the

coolness of eyes that may be eternal. I beg of Thee the acquiescence of my heart to Thy command and decision, and comfort in the life to come, and the boundless joy of seeing Thee, and the exquisite pang of desire for meeting Thee. (I beg Thee for all these blessings.) And I seek Thy Protection against all suffering and temptation and mischief.